



GOVERNOR'S
EMPOWER RURAL IOWA
INITIATIVE

Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative
Investing Rural Iowa Task Force Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, October 19
10:00 -11:00 AM

1. Roll Call:

Lt. Governor Gregg	Sandy Ehrig	Carla Eysink	David Barker
Tomisha Hammes	Mark Reinig	Brian Lenzmeier	Kimberly Tiefenthaler
Hunter Callanan	Tory Weary	Sarah Thompson	Chuck Morris
Lisa Houser	Wayne Pantini	Jordan DeGree	

2. Approval of minutes from the September 8, 2021 meeting:

Lt. Governor Gregg motioned to approve, and Brian Lenzmeier seconded. Passed unanimously.

3. Welcoming Remarks from Lt. Governor Gregg:

Thanked members for attending virtually today and is looking forward to a November in-person meeting at BV hosted by Brian. The press release was recently issued for the ERI grant programs and he asked members to help spread the word. Would like to be able to show progress to the legislature to demonstrate demand. Looking forward to today's agenda to provide more info on what the \$100 M can do to help us build on past successes.

4. Remarks by Co-Chair Sandy Ehrig:

Liesl, Troy and Mark and she were on the recent Rural Ideas panel. Great opportunity to participate. Next week we have the Leadership Exchange and the Grow taskforce subcommittee met yesterday to finalize details. This year they have added on a bootcamp for communities that want to start a leadership program. Liesl: Registration for Exchange closes on Friday. Have had a good response and looking forward to the event.

5. State Housing Initiatives Presentation:

[Ashley Jared, IFA: Housing Stigma Research](#) (Reference PPT for more detail.)

Exciting things happening in housing with the \$100M investment. Discussed research on done on the stigma surrounding affordable housing initiatives to help get everyone on same page to maximize investment. Need to rebrand housing. Affordable housing is needed, but still hear message that we want the housing, but not in my neighborhood. It's good for our

communities and Iowa currently needs 47,000 housing units by 2030, so we need to change the message.

Research: Lack of affordable housing impacts working Iowans we all encounter every day. Need to encourage the silent supporters to continue advocacy. Need to change message to be more welcoming to affordable housing for our neighbors and change verbiage from “affordable housing” to just “housing” – “Welcome Home Iowa” and in addition will be creating a housing developer toolkit and launching a website for Iowans to show support.

LG Comment: It is important to have an overarching strategy encompassing single family, multi-family, upper story housing, workforce housing. We don’t always mention the limitation on the WHTC, so some cost implementation – really trying to target middle class worker homes. Another reason we doubled the set-aside. Can you talk about the \$20M dedicated to worker housing? Ashley: that is a huge investment that will help reduce the backlog, really focused on workforce. A plan is being made currently to get the funds out quickly.

Brian: Would like to get these talking points in front of local constituents, and also can we get some talking points? Ashley – yes, will be sharing PPT, and will provide a one-pager. Also wants to be sure the TF is aware of the Iowa Profile Tool to help become informed. 2021 data has just been made available.

Nick Sorensen, IEDA – Downtown Housing Grant (Reference PPT slide for more detail.)

Nick provided an overview of the new Downtown Housing Grant, which provides \$20 million for downtown upper story housing for communities with populations up to 30,000. Eligible space must be vacant and underutilized. Funding amounts per project can be between \$100,000 to \$300,000 for nine units or less, and up to \$600,000 for over ten units, such as renovating vacant school buildings. Project must be in the vicinity of a downtown. Applications are now being accepted on iowagrants.gov with a January 31, 2022 deadline.

Question: Are communities able to apply for this and for a catalyst grant? Yes.

6. Grants & Programs Update:

Liesl gave an overview on the grant status. Press release just went out launching the four programs, two existing (Rural Innovation Grant, Rural Housing Assessment Grant), and two new (Rural Return Pilot Grant, Rural Child Care Market Study Grant). For the Child Care Market Study program, we are partnering with First Children’s Finance which will be conducting the studies. The Rural Return Program is an incentive program for communities to develop innovative models to attract people to their community. Applications and more information for all programs can be found via iowagrants.gov, with applications due by December 1, 2021.

The Leadership Exchange and Bootcamp will be held next week. We have 14 teams of three attending the bootcamp/

7. Public Comment - None

8. Wrap up & Next Steps

9. Dates for the next three task force meetings: Invest will be meeting in-person on November 17 in Storm Lake at Buena Vista from 12:00 – 2:30 and will include a tour; Grow will meet on November 16 from 10:00 – 11:00, and Connect will meet on November 18 from 2:00 – 3:00.

We are planning a December 15 combined meeting of the IRDC and ERI. Details to come, but looking at Oskaloosa for the location.

10. Adjourn