



RURAL HOUSING ASSESSMENT GRANT GUIDELINES

The Rural Housing Assessment Grant program supports the use of publicly available, online information and rural community efforts to interpret publicly available hard data to implement changes through development codes, local ordinances, and housing incentives specific to individual community needs.

In partnership with Iowa State University (ISU) Extension and Outreach's Rural Housing Readiness Assessment workshops, funding from the program will empower communities to assess their current development environment and enact changes resulting in the creation of policies and procedures attractive to potential developers.

The program, defined in [Iowa Administrative Code](#), is administered by the [Center for Rural Revitalization](#), a division of the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA), in consultation with the Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative task force and ISU Extension and Outreach.

TIMELINE

July 1, 2024 | Application Window Opens

Application available through [iowaGrants.gov](https://iowagrants.gov)

July 18, 2024 | Grant Informational Webinar

[Register for the informational webinar](#) to be held on Thursday July 18 at 9:00am CT. This webinar will be recorded and posted on the grant website.

August 30, 2024 | Application Deadline

Deadline to submit an application for funding is 4:00pm CT, August 30, 2024.

September 30, 2024 | Funding Decision Notification

Applicants notified of funding decisions by September 30, 2024.

October 1, 2024 - June 30, 2026 | Funding Period

All project activities and incurred expenses must occur within the eligible contracted funding period of October 1, 2024 - June 30, 2026. Funding is awarded on a reimbursement basis after expenses have been incurred for approved project activities.



ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Use of Funding

The Rural Housing Assessment Grant Program provides funding for housing assessment data collection and ISU Extension and Outreach Rural Housing Assessment Readiness Workshop. Funds may be used to fulfill that process at the discretion of the grant recipient but must contribute to the completion of the housing assessment report, workshop, or implementation of the workshop outcomes within the contract period.

Eligible Applicants

Local city and county governments, or federally recognized tribal governments physically located in Iowa are eligible. The government must exist in and benefit a community in Iowa with a population of 20,000 or fewer and not contiguous to a city with a population of 40,000 or greater. County-wide projects must be one of the 88 least-populous counties in Iowa.

Eligible Project Requirements

Requirements for Rural Housing Assessment grant awards include, but are not limited to the following:

- Applicant must demonstrate the capacity for grants administration.
- Application must demonstrate the feasibility of completing the proposed activities with the funds requested and contract period.
- Application must identify and describe any other sources of funding for the proposed activities.
- Applicant must provide \$10,000 cash match for each city or full county partnering on the application.
- Applications must agree to contract with ISU Extension and Outreach for the facilitated Rural Housing Assessment Readiness Workshop.
- Applications must identify any additional partner organizations that will be utilized in additional data collection or implementation processes.



FUNDING

Grant Request Amount

Grant Recipients will be awarded up to \$20,000. A portion of the total project cost must be used to contract with ISU Office of Extension and Outreach for the Rural Housing Assessment Readiness Workshop. The workshop price is dependent upon the number of communities involved.

Match Requirement

Applicants are required to demonstrate investment in the project process by providing a minimum of \$10,000 cash match. The cash match must be secured, dedicated to eligible expenses, a legitimate part of the project and must be expended within the eligible funding period. The \$10,000 match requirement may be raised through a combination of public and private sources but may not include in-kind donations of goods or services, unsecured funding, or loans.

- Cash match constitutes actual cash contributed to direct project expenses by the applicant or other funding sources.
- Funding from state government already being used as match from another program, including other funds from IEDA, cannot be used to meet the match requirement.

Funding Period

All project activities and incurred expenses must occur within the eligible contracted funding period of October 1, 2024 - June 30, 2026. Funding is awarded on a reimbursement basis after expenses have been incurred for approved project activities within the eligible funding period. Expenses incurred before or after the eligible funding period are not eligible for reimbursement.

ONLINE APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants must apply via lowagrants.gov, an online application portal. Applications will not be accepted in any other format. Late, incomplete, or ineligible applications will not be accepted. Applicants must create a login to view the full application for the program.

REVIEW PROCESS

Applications will be reviewed for completion, eligibility, and adherence to published guidelines. Applications are reviewed as submitted. New application information or subsequent application clarification submitted after a program deadline is not considered. Eligible applications will be referred for a competitive review by a volunteer panel, including the Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative task force members, ISU Extension and Outreach staff, and expert professionals (grant review committee). The grant review committee reserves the right to recommend conditional funding and partial funding. Funding recommendations will be submitted by the committee to the executive director of IEDA for consideration and approval. The applicant's authorized official will receive award notification. All funding decisions are final.

HOUSING COMMITTEE

Applicants are asked to establish a housing committee to guide the process. It is recommended that the committee be comprised of seven to 10 individuals, including elected officials, city staff, representatives from real estate and finance, non-profits, major employers and concerned residents. It is also recommended that the community advertise the opportunity to serve on the housing steering committee and provide public notice. Additional guidance can be provided by ISU Extension and Outreach.

SCORING RUBRIC

Eligibility Review

Applications must demonstrate evidence of the following:

- Applicant is eligible
- Funding request meets eligible project and expense requirements
- Request includes proof of \$10,000 cash match
- Project duration does not exceed contract period
- Application is complete and submitted through lowagrants.gov
- Applicant is a local city government(s) or federally recognized tribal government physically located in Iowa

Extra consideration is provided to applications that have projects located in a community of 10,000 or fewer (additional 5 points added to score total).

Application Review

The Rural Housing Assessment Grant Scoring Rubric will be used to evaluate applications. Each section has criteria and corresponding point values to ensure a fair review process. The rubric is on a scale of 57 points.

1 - APPLICANT PROFILE: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Applicant clearly identifies strategic priorities and appropriateness in initiating the study and demonstrates a strong record of progress through relevant achievements.	Applicant identified relevant notable achievements or strategic priorities.	Applicant did not adequately identify relevant notable achievements or strategic priorities.

2 - TIMING & NEED: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Proposal clearly identifies recent momentum, demonstrates excellent timing and commitment to active participation and engagement in addressing housing needs.	Proposal identifies some recent momentum and commitment to participation and engagement in addressing housing needs.	Proposal does not clearly or adequately identify recent momentum or demonstrates inappropriate timing and commitment to participation and engagement in addressing housing needs.

3 - HOUSING COMMITTEE: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Proposal clearly identifies an active committee with multiple, diverse partners. Key partner roles and responsibilities are well defined and will enhance the success of the process.	Proposal identifies a housing committee with multiple, diverse partners. Key partner roles and responsibilities are defined.	Proposal does not identify an active housing committee with multiple, diverse partners. Key partner roles and responsibilities are not well defined.

4 - EXISTING DOCUMENTATION: 2 points each		
2	2	2
Previous Housing Studies	Downtown Upper Story Inventory	Vacant Lot Survey or Data
2	2	2
Comprehensive Plan	Current Housing-Related City Ordinances	Ordinances or Resolutions Enacting Housing-Related Incentive Programs

5 - IMPLEMENTATION: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Proposal has strong implementation objectives. Project will be successfully realized through a clear, detailed timeline of deliverables. Applicant and partner responsibilities are well-defined.	Proposal has identified achievable implementation objectives and timeline of tasks. Applicant and partner responsibilities are identified.	Proposal implementation objectives are unclear or not measurable. Multiple concerns about project achievability. Timeline of tasks is insufficient. Applicant and partner responsibilities are unclear or not identified.

6 - BUDGET: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Project budget and intended use of funds are clear and appropriate.	Project budget and intended use of requested funds are identified and adequate.	Project budget and intended use of requested funds are unclear or inadequate.

7 - BUDGET LOCAL SUPPORT: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Majority of the applicant match is from local, including county and city government, or private sources.	Over half of the applicant match is from local, including county and city government, or private sources.	Less than half of the applicant match is from local, including county and city government, or private sources.

8 - SUPPORT MATERIAL: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Support material is highly relevant to the project, of high quality and clearly supports the project's need.	Support material relates to the project and is of average quality.	Support material is not relevant to the project, of poor quality or does not support the project's need.

9 - GRANTSMANSHIP & CASE FOR SUPPORT: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
The application is clear, concise, and well composed. Case for support is exemplary and merits investment from the State.	The application is clear. Case for support is adequate.	Application is unclear or poorly composed. Case for support is inadequate or does not merit State investment.

Contact

Potential applicants are encouraged to review all published material and contact Empower Rural Iowa Director Robin Bostrom at 515.348.6176 or rural@iowaeda.com, with questions well in advance of application deadlines.