



## Iowa Association of Regional Councils

For nearly forty years, Iowa's Councils of Governments (COGs) have played a critical role in Iowa's growth and development by providing professional planning, programming, and technical assistance to Iowa's cities, counties, businesses, community organizations, and Iowans of all ages.

### **Business Assistance**

COGs fund and operate regional revolving loan funds aimed at businesses creating or retaining job opportunities and investing in Iowa's economy. Combined with other state and federal funding as well as private investment, revolving loan funds provide gap financing to companies that may otherwise not have the resources to undertake new business opportunities. Regional revolving loan funds assist in creating new tax revenue for state and local governments and in putting Iowans to work.

### **Transportation**

Recognized as Regional Planning Affiliations by the Iowa Department of Transportation, COGs plan for and program the distribution of federal transportation funds within their regions, including highways, bridges, transit, trails, and other enhancement programs.

### **Disaster Recovery**

The State called on COGs to provide services in critical times, most recently after the natural disasters of 2008. In the past two years, the State relied upon COGs to assist communities, businesses, and families recover from the devastating natural disasters of 2008. In addition to administering the State's Jumpstart programs, COGs play an important role in:

- Assisting communities in planning for long-term recovery strategies
- Acting as liaison between communities and local, state, and federal agencies
- Leveraging state and federal financial assistance for local recovery efforts
- Delivering state and federal financial assistance to individual homeowners and businesses

### **Housing**

Iowa's COGs were initially involved in housing as either administrators of regional housing authorities or rehabilitation programs. But as interest in issues facing Iowa's housing stock increased in the 1990s, so did the involvement of its councils of governments. Today, COGs administer a variety of housing programs to address housing needs within their regions. These programs include:

- Owner occupied rehabilitation
- Down payment assistance
- Rental rehabilitation
- Affordable housing new construction

### Preferred Service Provider

COGs can mobilize their resources quickly to provide quality services in a timely manner across the entire state. Federal and state agencies have found that partnering with COGs is a cost effective way to deliver services on a regional basis.

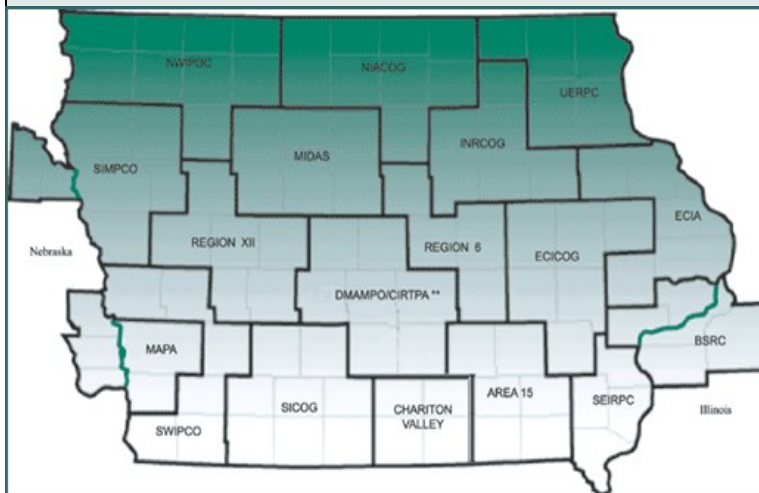
Iowa's COGs are flexible and experienced service providers as proven by their involvement in the 1993 and 2008 disasters. COGs swiftly developed programs to utilize American Reinvestment and Recovery Act and I-JOBS funding to support disaster recovery efforts. COGs have the capacity and leadership necessary to plan, implement, and manage programs and allocate funding quickly. From improving housing conditions to coordinating community health and nutrition initiatives, COGs are successful in delivering statewide programs.

### COG Assistance Funding

The State's investment in Iowa's COGs, through COG assistance funding, helps provide a variety of professional planning and development services to local governments. COG assistance funding helps COGs to:

- Develop comprehensive land use plans for cities and counties
- Help communities access economic development programs for business expansion and recruitment
- Prepare grant applications on behalf of communities for state programs, such as the CDBG Water & Sewer Fund and Housing Fund
- Provide other economic and community development services that communities may not otherwise receive

The State's investment assists in providing these services, which help grow Iowa communities, regions, and businesses.



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