

Strengthening Iowa's COGs: Building Capacity through the Iowa Association of Regional Councils

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Abstract

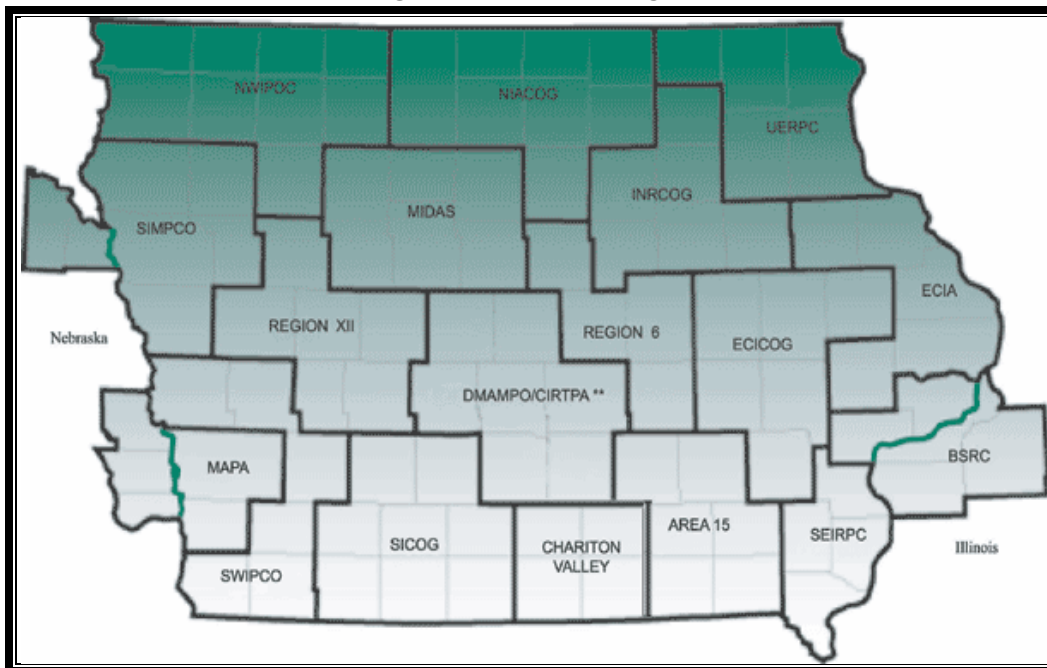
In April 2009, East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG) and the Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC) were awarded \$96,607 in funding through EDA’s Short Term Planning program. The purpose of the award is to assist in providing dedicated, professional staff to IARC, in an effort to enhance the capacity of IARC and its member councils of governments (COGs). This project is designed to serve as a model for other state associations. This report provides an update of the project, one year after award. The focus of IARC’s work during the first year of this award has been on increasing its visibility, and exploring new statewide initiatives and service delivery opportunities. Additional detail on these efforts is provided throughout this report.

During the next year, IARC will continue its outreach to various agencies. Recent developments within state government in Iowa are creating new opportunities for IARC and Iowa’s COGs to provide services on a regional basis. Over the next year, IARC will also begin to formulate a development plan to ensure future ongoing funding for a staff position.

Executive Summary

Iowa’s seventeen COGs were formed during the 1960’s and 1970’s. In 1967, Governor Harold Hughes directed the Iowa Office of Planning and Programming to conduct a study regarding the development of a regional system to support planning and service delivery. The report, “A Regional Delineation For the State of Iowa”, released in December 1967, proposed sixteen planning and service regions within the state of Iowa. The regions proposed in this report became the original boundaries for Iowa’s COGs.

Figure 1- Iowa’s COG Regions



Incorporated in 1988, the Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC) is the statewide professional organization for Iowa's councils of governments & regional planning commissions. Seventeen councils of governments & regional planning commissions currently exist in Iowa; Each of these agencies is a member of IARC. The map in figure 1 shows the current regions for each of Iowa's COGs. The IARC board of directors consists of each of the executive directors from the seventeen member organizations. A list of member organizations and board members can be found in the attachments to this report. The IARC board of directors meets once a month in the Des Moines area. The board also holds an annual director's retreat each May to set goals and plan IARC activities for the next year.

Since its inception, IARC has contracted with various agencies and individuals for administrative and association management services. The type of work performed by each contractor varied, as some contractors focused on providing only administrative support, and another focused primarily on lobbying efforts. In addition to utilizing contractors for certain activities, staff and directors from individual COGs took on certain tasks and administrative duties on behalf of IARC. In 2008, the IARC board began to explore the concept of hiring an individual to serve as IARC's Executive Director. In addition to providing association management services and administrative support, the board envisioned this position focusing on capacity building and developing new programs for IARC and its members. Prior to this time, IARC had not had a dedicated staff member focused on organizational growth and development.

In early 2009, IARC received a Short Term Planning grant from EDA. This award has allowed IARC to develop a new director position focused on building the capacity of IARC and its members. In May 2009, after issuing a request for proposals and completing an interview process, IARC entered into a contract with Nichole Warren to serve as the organization's executive director.

Within weeks of Warren joining IARC, a planning session was held at the 2009 IARC Director's retreat to develop priorities for the first year of this project. As a result of this planning session, the following priorities were established:

1. Improving IARC's financial stability
2. Increasing IARC's statewide visibility
3. Developing initiatives to build IARC's capacity

The priorities established by the board are directly tied to the scope of work activities included in IARC's EDA award. A copy of the FY 2010 IARC goals, with specific objectives, is included in the attachments to this report.

The first year of this project has included a variety of activities and initiatives designed to strengthen IARC as an organization and to enhance the benefits realized by its members. Highlights from the past year include:

- Exploring new funding opportunities through the Iowa Office of Energy Independence, USDA Rural Development and HUD
- One on one meetings with a various state agencies to discuss projects and future collaborations
- Involvement and support of legislation encouraging smart growth principals and emphasizing planning at the local, regional, and state levels
- Completion and distribution of the IARC Employment Law Handbook
- Holding the annual IARC Staff Retreat and model code of ordinances training
- Continued work with RIO on statewide disaster recovery efforts
- Hosting "Get To Know Your Region" training, in conjunction with NADO, for all COG staff

Additional detail on these activities is included throughout this report.

Project Activities

Statewide Projects/ Activities

Employment Law Handbook

The IARC Employment Law Handbook is a personnel summary guide for Iowa cities and counties and addresses issues relating to hiring, workplace administration and termination for public employers. In the past, IARC collaborated with the Iowa Department of Economic Development and other organizations to produce and distribute the Employment Law Handbook. In the late 1990's, IARC took over the project and became responsible for updating and distributing the handbook.

In November 2009, IARC contracted with Van Bokern Associates Inc. to update the handbook, which had not been updated since 2005. The latest edition of the handbook was completed and ready for distribution in January 2010.

While proceeds from handbooks sales were provided to IARC, handbooks were sold through individual COGs. Each COG was responsible for marketing the handbook to cities and counties within its region. IARC provided an electronic copy of the handbook to each COG, along with distribution instructions. COGs then printed handbooks as they were ordered. COGs were allowed to keep a portion of each handbook fee to cover printing and delivery costs.

As several counties in central Iowa are not covered by a COG at this time, IARC contacted each community and county within the Central Iowa region and provided order forms to those local governments.

To date, over 100 copies of the 2009 Employment Law Handbook have been sold. This project has not only provided Iowa cities and counties with a useful reference tool, but has generated additional revenue for IARC as well.

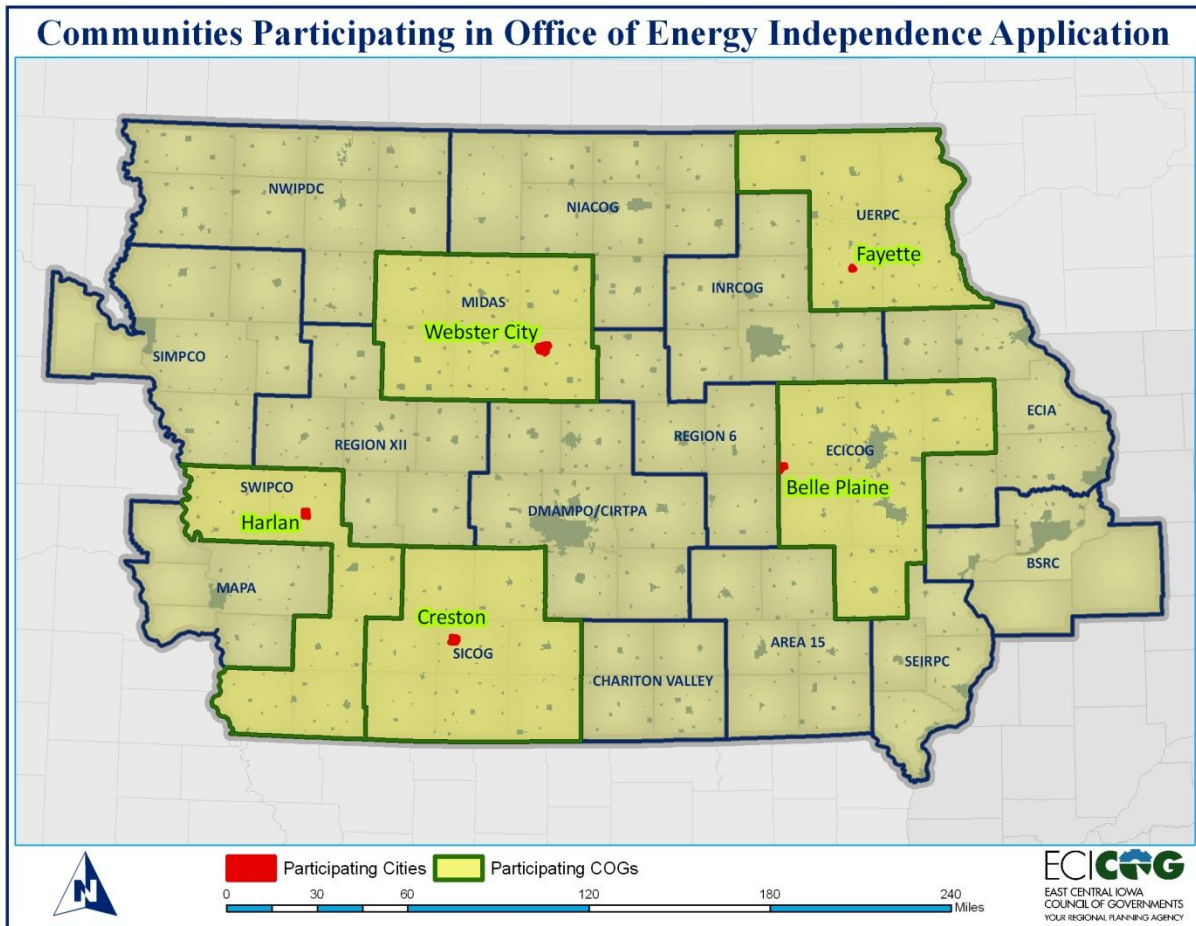
Community Grants Program proposal through the Iowa Office of Energy Independence

Over the past year, IARC has applied twice to the Iowa Office of Energy Independence's Community Grants Program. This program is designed to assist with community energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. The first application for funding was submitted in November 2009, and was denied. The second application was submitted in March 2010 and is still under review.

Both applications proposed development of a community energy reduction and sustainability planning model that can be replicated statewide. Working with five pilot communities, COG staff will work with the communities to develop a community energy plan, which will include an energy analysis, goals and objectives, action plan, timeline, funding/implementation strategy, and evaluation process/tool. Upon completion of this project, COG staff will continue to work with participating communities on energy reduction efforts by providing technical assistance, preparing funding applications, and working to incorporate energy reduction strategies into existing community plans (i.e. transportation plans). A further description of this concept is included in the attachments to this report.

A map illustrating the proposed pilot communities and participating COGs is included below.

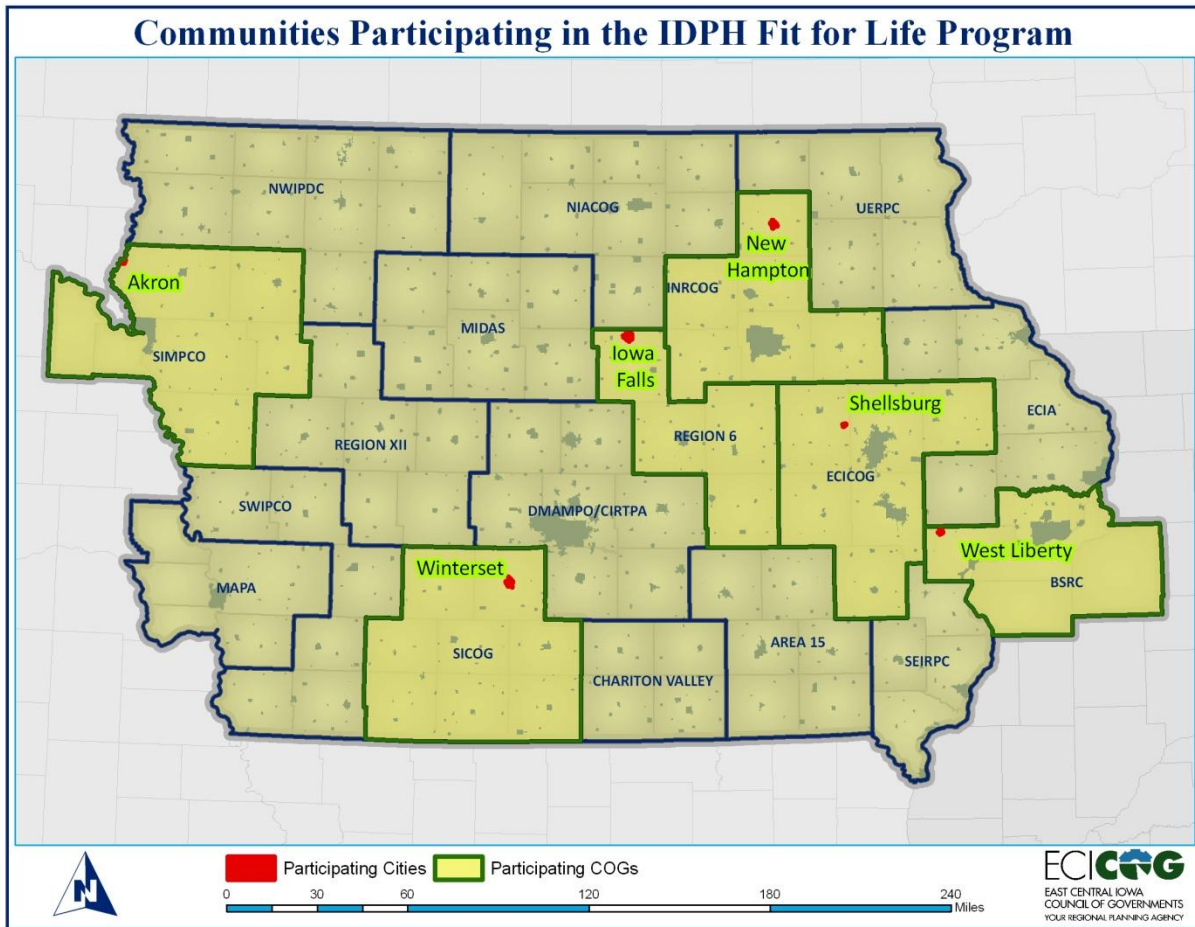
Figure 2- Proposed pilot communities for Office of Energy Independence application



Iowa Department of Public Health's Fit For Life

In FY 2010, IARC contracted with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) to coordinate the State's Iowans Fit for Life initiative. In July 2009, IDPH selected six communities, based on COG recommendations, to create a pilot program focused on fitness and nutrition across the State. IARC and IDPH partnered to utilize local COG staff in the asset mapping and planning process in the six pilot communities. Each of the six participating COGs were tasked with providing technical assistance and facilitating the asset mapping process developed for this program. After identifying potential activities through the asset mapping process, each community was awarded \$10,000 to complete a health related community project.

Figure 3: Communities/COGs involved in IDPH project



This project will continue into next year, as IDPH has secured funding for phase 2 of this project, which will involve the elementary schools in the six participating communities. COG staff will lead school officials and community members through the same asset mapping process to identify a school project that can be completed. Like the community projects, school projects will also focus on improving students' health and increasing physical activity. IDPH will provide funding to assist with project implementation.

Disaster Recovery Activities

Iowa's COGs have been integral to statewide recovery efforts in response to the natural disasters of 2008. COGs continue to assist communities, businesses and families throughout Iowa by:

- Assisting communities in planning for long-term recovery strategies;
- Serving as a 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.

EDA provided economic disaster recovery funding through the COGs, since Iowa's COGs serve as designated Economic Development Districts (EDDs). The investment of federal funds allowed COGs to hire staff to serve as disaster recovery coordinators and provide services directly related to recovery efforts within their respective regions. During year one of this project, IARC continued to host regular meetings of the COG disaster recovery coordinators, with the assistance of Ryan Fincel at SWIPCO. These meetings have allowed coordinators to share information and best practices. Disaster recovery coordinators continue to meet every other month in conjunction with the IARC board meeting. As regional recovery efforts begin to shift and EDA contracts end, Iowa's disaster recovery coordinators will meet for once a month in June, July, and August 2010.

In July 2009, IARC and EDA representatives met with RIO staff to discuss how to improve communications between COGs and RIO. As a result of this meeting, RIO agreed to utilize IARC, specifically its director, as a resource for information sharing and ongoing reporting. IARC and RIO agreed to include RIO staff on each IARC board meeting agenda. RIO's presence each month provides RIO staff the opportunity to report on its activities and provides the IARC board with a chance to discuss regional efforts.

Outreach and Marketing Activities

Executive Director's COG visits

Warren has worked towards visiting each COG during her first year with IARC. Warren was able to visit fifteen of the seventeen COGs during the past year, with another visit scheduled for June 2010. Through visiting IARC's member agencies, Warren has been able to learn about the unique aspects of each region and member organization. Visits have also provided Warren an opportunity to talk with each COG director about IARC as an organization and how the association can assist their specific agency.

Meetings with partner agencies

IARC has made a strong effort over the past year to reach out to partner agencies. One of Warren's first tasks as Executive Director was to schedule one on one meetings with various agencies. The intent of these meetings was to discuss existing projects, any on-going issues, and future collaborations. During the first year of this project, IARC representatives met with representatives from the Iowa Department of Economic Development, Iowa Finance Authority, Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Office of Energy Independence, Iowa Department of Transportation, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, and USDA Rural Development. These meetings are not only important in fostering IARC's relationship with partner agencies, but help increase IARC's visibility within state government.

While IARC and its members have traditionally worked closely with several of the agencies, IARC is striving to establish new partnerships as well. The Office of Energy Independence is a new agency. As such, there is a need to continue educating staff on the role of COGs in Iowa, and how IARC can assist the agency in meeting its mission. Warren has met with staff from the Office of Energy Independence on multiple occasions throughout the past year, as IARC believes there is tremendous opportunity for partnership between the agency and COGs.

Marketing tools

In December 2009, IARC created a one-page marketing piece. This piece focused on the types of assistance provided by Iowa's COGs and how the State's COG Assistance funding helps IARC members provide a variety of services. This brochure was made available at the IARC Legislative Breakfast, held in January 2010.

This brochure can be used when meeting with agencies and at various conferences and booths.

IARC has continued to prepare and distribute its quarterly newsletter, the IARCourier. This e-newsletter is distributed to all of Iowa's legislators and a wide variety of state and federal staff/ officials. The newsletter is also posted on the IARC website at www.iarcog.com. In spring of 2010, IARC decided to include an article on the COGs' disaster recovery efforts into each issue of the IARCourier in an effort to educate the public on regional efforts still underway as a result of the 2008 disasters.

IARC has also created a page on Facebook, as a way to share information on IARC's mission and work.. Over the next year, IARC will be working on improving information made available on the Facebook page, and determining the most beneficial uses of social networking tools.

The creation of the Executive Director position has greatly improved IARC's outreach efforts. The position has provided a single point of contact and a face to the organization. Agencies who wish to share information with Iowa's COGs are able to contact IARC directly. Having an Executive Director has allowed IARC representation at a variety of meetings and events. IARC has been pleased that partner agencies have quickly identified the director as a resource and liaison to Iowa's COGs.

Educational Activities

Education and staff training is one of the most valuable services provided by IARC. Conferences and trainings not only benefit COG staff statewide, these events have the potential to generate revenue for the organization. Educational events held or developed over the past year are described below.

2009 IARC Staff Retreat

The 2009 IARC Staff Retreat was held in September 2009. Held in Ankeny, Iowa, the event lasted a day and a half and included presentations from a variety of state agencies and planning professionals. Topics covered included zoning in Iowa, state financial assistance programs, and TIF and tax abatement. IARC's model code of ordinances training was held during day 2 of the staff retreat as well.

The model code training was conducted by attorney Bill Blum. Mr. Blum, along with Larry Nagle at East Central Intergovernmental Association, prepare annual updates to IARC's model code of ordinances, a model code or template that COGs may use within their regions when working with communities on city codes and ordinances. Each year, IARC's model code training provides COG staff with an overview of changes and additions to the model, based on changes in Iowa Code.

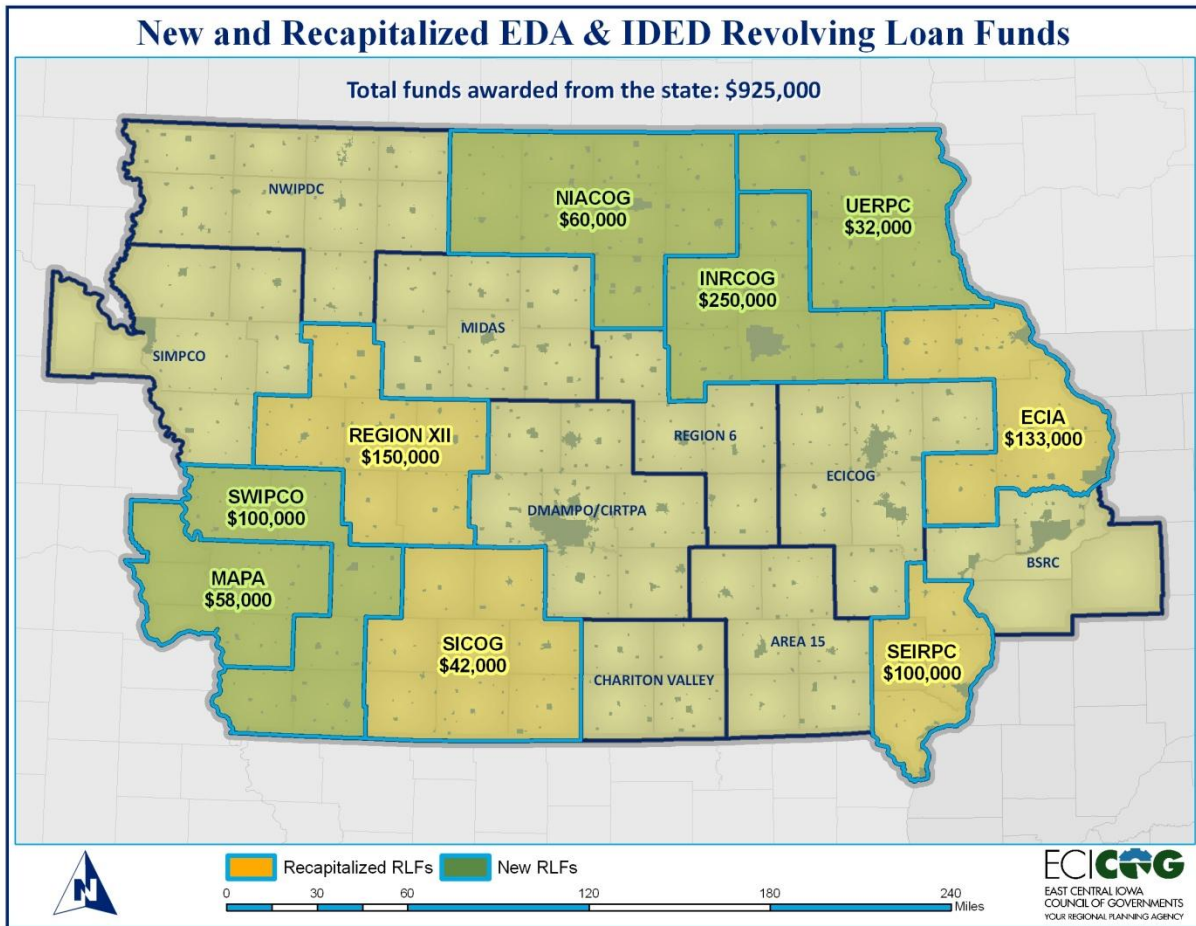
After the event, Warren provided a survey to each of the retreat attendees. The goal of the survey was to collect feedback on how to improve future trainings and to determine staff training needs and interests. The results of the survey were positive, and provided good ideas on future retreats. The retreat agenda as well as survey results are included in the attachments to this report.

Staff roundtable discussions/meetings

Last fall, the IARC board and Warren decided to facilitate quarterly or semi-annual meetings for certain COG staff. The intent was to give similar staff at different agencies the chance to meet and compare best practices and ideas, and share resources.

The most critical need for this type of discussion was seen among COG revolving loan fund administrators. In 2009, nine COGs received funding from both EDA and the Iowa Department of Economic Development to establish and recapitalize regional revolving loan funds. Of these awards, five established new revolving loan funds, while four existing funds were recapitalized. The investment of new state and federal funding allowed COGs to meet regional demands for additional business capital.

Figure 4: New & Recapitalized COG RLFs in Iowa



With the addition of several new loan funds, IARC felt it was important for all revolving loan fund administrators to meet, providing the opportunity for experienced administrators to provide assistance and information to new administrators. In December 2009, IARC hosted a roundtable discussion for COG revolving loan fund administrators. The session ran concurrent with the December IARC board meeting and discussion focused on requirements for each agency's loan fund, lending criteria, and loan procedures and protocols.

Through discussions at IARC board meetings held over the past year, IARC identified a need to host a roundtable for COG fiscal officers as well. In early March 2009, IARC hosted a fiscal officers' roundtable in the Des Moines area. The session ran approximately half a day and discussion items included cost allocation plans and training opportunities for fiscal staff. Two COG directors attended the roundtable as well. Those attending the roundtable suggested that the 2010 IARC Staff Retreat contain a tract for fiscal officers to provide additional discussion opportunities and training for fiscal staff. IARC plans to continue to host fiscal officer meetings three to four times per year.

Revolving loan fund conference

After hosting the roundtable session, the IARC board identified a further need for training for loan fund administrators. The board decided to pursue conducting a revolving loan fund conference, similar to the conference IARC hosted several years ago. An IARC committee was formed to develop an agenda for the

conference. The committee consists of several COG revolving loan fund administrators, a member of the IARC board, Warren, and Forlesia Willis with EDA. To date, the committee has had a conference call and much of the content for the conference has been determined. Warren has contacted the Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) to discuss the idea of IARC and IADG partnering to host the conference. IADG is a statewide economic development organization which serves member-owned and municipal electric service areas in Iowa. IADG was a sponsor of the previous IARC RLF conference. IADG staff also assisted IARC with developing the agenda for the last conference, as many of IADG's members operate revolving loan funds on behalf of the area electric utility. IARC will also explore working with the Professional Developers of Iowa (PDI) on the RLF conference. As PDI represents the state's economic development agencies, IARC feels many of PDI's members would have an interest in attending the conference. It is possible that this conference will be held in conjunction with the 2010 IARC Staff Retreat, scheduled for late September 2010.

Know Your Region training

In April 2009, IARC worked with the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) to host "Know Your Region" training in Des Moines for Iowa COG staff, as well as COG staff from surrounding states. Funded through EDA and managed by NADO, this curriculum is designed to highlight approaches to regional and local economic development. Fifty COG staff attended this training, as well as two individuals from the Northwest Missouri Council of Governments.

Floodplain/ watershed management training

In early 2010, IARC was contacted by National Resources Conservation Services and Iowa State University Extension to discuss the development of a training session for COG planners on floodplain/ watershed management issues. Several meetings have been held and a training concept has been developed. The training agenda will focus on technical issues related to floodplain/ watershed management, with the intent that information provided will be useful in all aspects of planning (transportation, etc.). IARC is working with ISU Extension and NRCS, with the assistance of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, to develop a survey for COG planning staff. The survey will collect information on areas where staff feels they could benefit from additional training. This survey will help determine content for the training and assess what information should or should not be included. We hope this training can be held during summer 2010.

Scope of work progress

Progress has been made on nearly all areas of the scope of work included in the EDA contract. The following section describes IARC's work over the past year toward its contractual obligations as defined by the Scope of Work included in the EDA contract.

East Central Iowa Council of Governments/ IARC responsibilities

- Issue an RFP on behalf of IARC for association management services.

Progress to date:

ECICOG drafted an RFP that was reviewed and approved by the IARC Executive Committee. During that process, it was determined that bookkeeping functions would remain at SWIPCO, as a system had been established that was providing adequate financial oversight and accurate reporting.

- In consultation with the IARC executive committee, select a limited pool of respondents for interviews.

Progress to date:

IARC conducted two RFP solicitations. The first solicitation was made available in January 2009. Initially the RFP was distributed to organizations including the American Planning Association, Professional Developers of Iowa, and several management firms. The advertisement was also posted on the IARC website, and advertised in local media. Only a few responses were received, and it was determined that none of the applicants provided the experience and competencies that IARC sought. A second solicitation was conducted in March 2009, resulting in 26 applicants, four of which the executive committee deemed appropriate to interview.

- Coordinate, and in consultation with the IARC executive committee, conduct interviews and select a firm/individual (Contractor).

Progress to date:

The IARC executive committee selected four respondents for interviews. Interviews were conducted in late March 2009. References were contacted immediately following completion of the interview process. IARC contacted Nichole Warren with an offer for the executive director position on April 3, 2009. Warren accepted the position on April 6, 2009.

- Negotiate a service contract for an annually renewable, three-year term.

Progress to date:

IARC and contractor, Nichole Warren, successfully negotiated a contract for services, which was signed on April 27, 2009. This contract became effective on May 1, 2009. The IARC executive committee will bring a recommendation on Warren's FY 2011 contract to the full IARC board at the June 11, 2010 IARC meeting.

- In consultation with the IARC executive committee, conduct a performance review prior to each opportunity for renewal.

Progress to date:

In April 2010, the IARC executive committee met to discuss Warren's performance review. Members of the executive committee completed an evaluation form assessing Warren's performance over the past year.

The executive committee met with Warren on May 14, 2010 to conduct her performance review. At the June 11, 2010 IARC Board meeting, the executive committee will bring a recommendation to the board regarding Warren's contract for the next fiscal year.

- Administer the EDA funding contract on an ongoing basis through its duration, including financial oversight and the following reporting requirements:

- Submit a mid-point progress reports, draft, and final report according to the guidelines. ECICOG may also provide an oral report to EDA staff at the mid-point and completion of the project.
- Document or identify challenges encountered during this process so they can be avoided by other similar organizations pursuing similar activities.
- Document in the report the process in completing the scope of work and point out key elements that can be replicated by others.
- Identify funding sources or a course of action to continue staffing IARC after the three-year funding grant is complete.
(ECICOG will receive assistance from the Contractor in fulfilling these reporting requirements)

Progress to date:

Over the past year, IARC and ECICOG have worked together to administer the EDA contract, and submit all required reports.

The preparation of this mid-point report has been a valuable exercise, in that IARC has began the process of documenting its challenges as well as accomplishments. IARC will work over the next year to include this information on our website, so that this project can serve as a model to other state associations nationwide.

Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCOG) responsibilities

- Host IARC website, and provide ongoing maintenance including, but not limited to, regular updates of:
 - Employment opportunity listings;
 - IARC meetings and events calendar;
 - IARC on-line, member-restricted resource library;
 - Member organization contact information.

Progress to date:

INRCOG staff continues to maintain and update the IARC website. During the past year, the following materials have been added or updated to the website:

- 2010 meeting calendar
- Job postings for SWIPCO and INRCOG
- Presentations from the 2009 IARC Staff Retreat
- Updated 2010 IARC Staff Directory, which provides contact information for all COG employees statewide
- Press releases from IARC since May 2009
- IARCourier newsletters distributed over the past year
- Presentation materials from USDA Rural Development webinar on housing programs
- IARC Employment Handbook information, including description and ordering instructions

- “Get To Know Your Region” training presentation conducted in Des Moines on April 15, 2010 in conjunction with the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO)
- Expand the website to include documentation of ongoing progress in the IARC staffing project including, but not limited to:
 - Milestones and accomplishments;
 - Resources created/leveraged for the benefit of IARC membership;
 - Resources created/leveraged for the benefit of the IARC organization and its ongoing staffing needs;
 - Projects/activities suitable for replication in other states/by other organizations. (INRCOG will receive assistance from the Contractor in fulfilling these elements of the Scope of Work)

Progress to date:

In an effort to make the website more useful to COG staff as well as the public, IARC has developed a list of changes and additions planned for the website. The list of suggested changes has been provided to INRCOG. INRCOG and IARC staff will work together over the next several months to update the website. Proposed changes to the website can be found in the attachments to this report.

Proposed content to the website will focus on:

- Providing additional resources to COG staff statewide
- Providing information on IARC accomplishments and initiatives over the past year
- Providing information on future goals and objectives

The IARC website is a valuable tool for its members. Revamping the website to further develop and update its content will not only benefit our members, but will allow IARC to provide better information to our partners on the services and capabilities of Iowa’s COGs.

- Provide ongoing technical assistance to IARC in website usage/internet

Progress to date:

INRCOG staff continues to provide assistance to IARC with website usage and content. INRCOG staff is readily available to answer technical questions, and provide suggestions on content and formatting. IARC will be working closely with INRCOG staff during the next year on website development issues.

Contractor responsibilities

I. Board Management

- Board meeting arrangements – schedule meetings, prepare agenda, contact and confirm presenters, arrange for reminder calls and email to board members and disseminate agenda.
- Preparation and dissemination of board meeting minutes.

- Preparation and dissemination of board meeting materials and packets.

Progress to date:

Since hired in May 2009, Executive Director Nichole Warren has been responsible for coordinating and planning monthly board meetings. Warren works with the IARC Board Chair to develop an agenda for each meeting. Once an agenda is developed, Warren is responsible for contacting presenters and distributing presentation materials to the board. Warren is also responsible for preparing all meeting minutes, and collecting financial reports from SWIPCO's Finance Director. Monthly board meeting materials are distributed typically one week prior to the IARC board meeting, via email. Board meeting packets distributed to board members include a meeting agenda, meeting minutes from the previous month, monthly financial reports, and a written director's report.

- Monthly follow up from each board meeting as needed – correspondence, scheduling additional meetings, sending out information, etc.

Progress to date:

Warren handles all meeting correspondence, scheduling, and follow up materials/ items generated from IARC board meetings. All pertinent information is provided to IARC board members.

- Coordinate arrangements for annual directors' retreat, strategic plan facilitation and preparation of summary and annual work plan.

Progress to date:

At the May 2009 IARC Board retreat, Warren facilitated a strategic planning session to guide the board in setting goals and objectives for fiscal year 2010. Goals and objectives were developed and are included in the attachments to this report.

The 2010 IARC director's retreat was held on May 13-14, 2010 in West Des Moines. Warren worked with the board chairman to develop an agenda, which included a strategic planning session facilitated with assistance from Doug Hermes with the Missouri Association of Councils of Governments. Results from this recent planning exercise will be compiled into a plan which will direct IARC's work and initiatives for the next 1 to 2 years.

- Assist board in monitoring state and national trends and identifying new opportunities.

Progress to date:

In the first year of this project, much emphasis has been placed on identifying new service opportunities for IARC and its members. Identification of new statewide projects will continue to be a priority for IARC during the upcoming year as well.

Below is a list of projects/opportunities that Warren, and IARC members, have developed or explored over the past year:

- Submittal of two funding applications to the Iowa Office of Energy Independence to develop a model community energy planning tool that may be replicated statewide
- Development of a USDA Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) funding application focused on regional energy planning efforts throughout Iowa

- Exploration of a statewide project, in conjunction with several state agencies, under HUD's new Livable Communities program
- Collaboration with the Iowa Office of Energy Independence, and other agencies, on two funding applications to the U.S. Department of Energy. These applications have proposed bringing stakeholders together, including IARC, to implement extensive retrofit projects in several communities, and create regional energy centers, and create a new energy finance tool. IARC worked with the Office of Energy Independence to develop the proposals and to provide input as to the role Iowa's COGs can play in these projects.
- Serve as board's primary liaison to other state, regional, and national agencies, organizations, and associations.

Progress to date:

Over the past year, IARC has been invited to serve on several boards and committees. Taking over for ECICOG Director Doug Elliott, Warren has served on the Inter-Agency Coordination Team (IACT) through the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO). IACT was created to facilitate information sharing on disaster recovery work and initiatives taking place statewide through a variety of agencies.

Warren has been asked to be a member of the newly established state USDA Rural Development Working Group, which was formed in an effort to bring partners together and strategically align resources to promote economic and rural development in Iowa. This group meets on a quarterly basis.

Warren has also been invited to serve as a board member to the Iowa Rural Development Council. The Iowa Rural Development Council is the state association of the National Rural Development Partnership and which looks to promote collaboration through bringing together government, non-profit, and private sector partners in an effort to support rural Iowa. After several years of inactivity, the council is being revived with new leadership.

Warren has been invited to represent IARC at several meetings/ focus groups hosted by Iowa State University Extension office, including a meeting to discuss initiating a statewide indicators project and a focus group to discuss Extension services and any gaps that may exist.

II. Finance/Administration

- Maintain an office and/ or point of contact in the Des Moines, Iowa, metropolitan area.
- Act as primary point of contact for organization.

Progress to date:

Since taking the director position, Warren has served as the official IARC contact. All IARC correspondence and materials are sent to her attention. Warren's office is located in Altoona, Iowa, which is in the Des Moines metropolitan area.

- Accounts Receivable – invoicing, coding, deposits.
- Accounts Payable (posting, paying, filing).
- Monthly financial reports.

- Monthly bank account reconciliation.

Progress to date:

During the development of the RFP for the Executive Director position, the IARC Executive Committee determined that bookkeeping functions would remain at the Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO), as a system had been established that was providing adequate financial oversight and accurate reporting. The Executive Director approves payment of all expenses, with IARC Executive Committee member and SWIPCO Director, MJ Broomfield, signing checks on behalf of IARC. Revenues and expenses of the organization are reviewed by the Executive Director and the IARC Board on a monthly basis.

In addition, IARC's FY 2009 financials have been reviewed by CPA Bonnie Lettow, Fiscal Officer at North Iowa Area Council of Governments (NIACOG). No discrepancies were found during the review.

- COG Assistance administration – tracking requests, documenting, filing, disbursement.

Progress to date:

Warren administers all COG Assistance funding requests and tracking, and oversees all reporting associated with the program. Warren is the Iowa Department of Economic Development contact for the program.

- IDPH/IDNR Healthy Iowans Initiative administration - tracking requests, documenting, filing, disbursement.

Progress to date:

Warren administers all IDPH Healthy Iowans funding requests and tracking, and oversees all reporting associated with the program. Warren is the Iowa Department of Public Health contact for the program, and works closely with state staff on all reporting and contracting issues for this project.

- Annual tax report (990) – support preparation.
- Financial record retention and storage.
- Oversee outsourcing of IRS 1099 preparation and delivery as required.

Progress to date:

SWIPCO's Finance Officer has handled the above items, as part of regular bookkeeping functions. Warren has provided, and is available for assistance as needed. Warren has also kept copies of financial reports generated over the past year, since taking the position with IARC.

- Biennial report filed with Secretary of State for incorporation.

Progress to date:

IARC's next biennial report to the Iowa Secretary of State is due in January 2011. Warren will prepare and submit the report to the State.

- Database administration – membership and directory requests.

Progress to date:

All IARC distribution lists and databases are managed by Warren. Warren is responsible for handling IARC directory requests received from both IARC members and outside agencies/individuals.

- Manage, route, and respond as appropriate to all written, email, and telephone correspondence on behalf of IARC.
- General office functions – copying, postage, fax.

Progress to date:

Warren is responsible for all IARC correspondence, including emails and written correspondence. She, and responds to correspondence received, and routes information to the full IARC board as necessary. Warren performs general office functions as needed, including copying, faxing, and preparing and sending IARC related materials.

- Provide regular financial reports to ECICOG for purposes of financial reporting to EDA.
- Assist ECICOG with mid-point, draft, and final reports to EDA, including participation in any oral reporting.

Progress to date:

Since serving as IARC director, Warren has coordinated the completion of all EDA reports, including financial reports, with the assistance of ECICOG.

III. Program Development

- Coordinate annual publication of COG Directory.

Progress to date:

IARC prepared and released its annual COG directory in January 2010. Information from the 2009 directory was provided to the COGs for review. After updates were provided, the directory information was provided to the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA). MAPA staff handled formatting and document design, and contracted with a local company for printing services. In addition to the annual COG directory, IARC has typically prepared a staff directory, which provides individual contact information for COG staff statewide. This information is valuable to state and federal agencies as well as COG staff statewide. In March 2010, IARC updated the staff directory, which is available on the IARC website.

- Coordinate educational activities, e.g., Staff Retreat, RLF conference, Model Code training.
- Coordinate arrangements for other conferences, workshops, and events sponsored by IARC, or in which IARC has a significant role.

Progress to date:

Over the past year, IARC has hosted several educational events for COG staff, including:

- 2009 IARC Staff Retreat & model code training
- Fiscal Officers roundtable
- RLF Administrators roundtable
- “Get To Know Your Region” training, in conjunction with NADO

IARC is currently planning for a revolving loan fund conference, as well as the 2010 IARC Staff Retreat. The 2010 retreat will focus on housing development and planning issues, and will include a tract for COG fiscal officers/ staff.

Warren has met twice with representatives from Iowa State University Extension and National Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) to develop training on watershed/ floodplain management issues for planning staff.

Warren is also working with Iowa State University staff to conduct regional training sessions on Iowa’s new smart planning legislation. This training will serve as a “train the trainer” session, and will provide information for COG staff to share with communities.

- Marketing opportunities – staffing booth at statewide conferences and events as identified.

Progress to date:

IARC hosted its annual Legislative Breakfast at the State Capitol in January 2010. This event allows IARC staff and Iowa’s COGs to visit with legislators about issues facing Iowa’s regions and to market the work being done by Iowa’s COGs. IARC also participated in Rebuild Iowa Day at the Capitol. Hosted by the Rebuild Iowa Office, Rebuild Iowa Day provided an opportunity for those involved with disaster recovery efforts to discuss their work with legislators, legislative staff, and other agencies.

- Design and produce all IARC organizational materials and publications, except Directory.

Progress to date:

Warren, with the input of IARC Board members, has developed several publications over the past year. Documents and materials prepared include:

- 2010 IARC Staff Directory
- One-page marketing piece, made available at IARC’s legislative breakfast
- A billfold-sized “COG card” which can be used as a marketing tool. IARC has not yet used this product but may use in the future
- all quarterly IARC Courier newsletter for the past year
- Various press releases on IARC events and announcements

IARC has discussed, and is exploring working with NADO to prepare a detailed COG impact report for the state of Iowa.

- Provide regular reports and website content to INRCOG to assist in website maintenance, the development of new website resources, and updates on IARC progress as it pertains to the staffing project.

Progress to date:

This is an area that IARC will focus on over the next year. Proposed changes to the website have been provided to INRCOG. IARC will also ask for input from COGs regarding what information would be valuable to include on the website.

IARC believes updating and adding content to its website will make the site more useful to the public and COG staff. IARC has used the website over the past year to provide meeting information and materials, including presentations from staff retreats and trainings. However, there are additional ways to utilize the website which IARC will need to explore.

- Prepare annual salary survey update.

Progress to date:

The 2009 IARC salary survey was distributed to each COG in November 2009 for review and updates. Data was provided to IARC over the month of December. The updated salary survey was released in January 2010. This report provides information by job position/ category and includes every position at each of the seventeen COGs. IARC will plan to update this information and release a new report in early 2011.

- Work closely with other state and federal agencies to identify statewide and/or multi-regional initiatives appropriate for implementation through IARC.

Progress to date:

Since May 2009, Warren, and in most cases, members of the IARC board have met with the following state and federal agencies:

- Iowa Department of Economic Development
- Iowa Finance Authority
- Rebuild Iowa Office
- USDA Rural Development
- Iowa Department of Transportation
- Iowa Office of Energy Independence
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa Department of Public Health
- Iowa State University Extension

These meetings have focused on strengthening IARC's relationship with the agency and discussion on new services that IARC may be able to assist the agency in providing. IARC has worked to promote COGs as the state's ideal vehicle for regional service delivery.

Warren has continued to visit regularly with staff from the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO), in an effort to improve communication between IARC and RIO. As a result, RIO had become a standing agenda

item on each IARC board meeting agenda at which RIO staff is able to provide a monthly report to the IARC board. RIO is also able to collect information from the board on COG activities, and to answer questions from IARC members.

- Provide leadership in developing new opportunities for membership in service delivery and programmatic initiatives.

Progress to date:

Below is a description of IARC's new and continued initiatives from the past year:

- Iowa's Smart Planning Task Force- During the last session, Iowa's legislature passed a smart planning bill, which establishes a task force to review planning efforts statewide. IARC was named in the legislation as an assistant to the Iowa Department of Management in staffing and administering the task force. Assistance with the state task force will likely comprise a good deal of IARC staff time over the next six months.
- Low Income Housing Tax Credit inspections- Iowa's COGs continued their work with the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) on inspecting properties for the state's tax credit program. Rather than send state staff to conduct physical inspections of these properties, IFA has found that utilizing COGs for this services is an efficient and cost effective way to complete inspections on a regional basis. This is the second year that COGs will contract with IFA for these services. This project has helped to strengthen the partnership between IARC and IFA. IARC believes this model can be used as an example when working and communicating with other agencies on possible collaborations.
- Iowans Fit for Life School and Community Intervention project- IARC has worked with the Iowa Department of Public Health on this new initiative. The goal of this initiative is to encourage more healthy lifestyles among children through better nutrition and increased physical activity. This two-year project involves six COGs, along with six Iowa communities and the community's elementary school. Participating COGs received training, through the assistance of IDPH, on an asset mapping process which is conducted with both the communities and the school to identify potential health-related projects.
- Data collection project- In response to information and examples presented at IARC/NADO's "Get To Know Your Region" training held in April, Warren and the IARC Board have discussed IARC serving as a data collection center for a variety of statewide economic data. Warren and Sharon Juon, Executive Director of Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments, will meet with Iowa State University in late May and will discuss this project to help determine how the university center may play a role.
- Services for Iowa's new floodplain management association- IARC has been involved with a statewide effort to form a statewide association for floodplain managers. The organization, which will be the Iowa Floodplain and Stormwater Management Association, is in the process of preparing articles of incorporation and by-laws. IARC has an interest in assisting the newly formed

organization with administrative and association management services. Warren is exploring this idea with the association's interim board.

- Present to the IARC board a development plan and assist with implementation to ensure adequate funding for ongoing staff assistance after the three-year EDA grant funding period.

Progress to date:

Preparation of a development plan to ensure future staff funding was identified as a top priority at the IARC director's retreat in mid-May. While a plan has not yet been drafted, there have been several options discussed informally among board members including restructuring the IARC dues structure, utilizing state COG assistance funding to pay for staffing costs, and exploring the possibility of new funding from state agencies. IARC has conducted some initial research into how other state associations fund similar positions. Further research will need to be completed in this area. Over the next year, IARC will develop specific strategies for securing new funding.

- Other special project administration and activities as identified in strategic plan and mutually determined with board of directors.

Progress to date:

As issues and projects arise, the IARC Board has asked Warren to assist with those activities. Examples include:

- Working with the Iowa Department of Economic Development to determine whether the agency will regard COGs as vendors or subrecipients when COGs serve as the administrator on CDBG projects
- Marketing and distributing IARC's Employment Law Handbook to central Iowa counties
- Attending legislative meetings regarding the State's Smart Planning legislation

Challenges and opportunities

During year one of this project, IARC has faced challenges and opportunities in completing activities included in the scope of work and in meeting its organizational goals. Below is a description of difficulties encountered as well as future opportunities that IARC will explore in the future.

Challenge 1: Perception surrounding the lack of a central Iowa COG- Today, 93% of Iowa's counties are served by a regional planning commission or COG. However, there is no COG in the central Iowa region, leaving seven counties without a regional organization. The central Iowa region includes Iowa's largest city and state capitol, Des Moines. The chart below provides a breakdown of the population of each region, including the central Iowa region. Figure 1 on page 1 of this report shows the map of the existing COG regions in Iowa, as well as the region currently unserved. Several communities within central Iowa have become associate members of a neighboring COG, allowing those cities to receive COG services.

Figure 5: Regional population chart

Regional Planning Commission/ Council of Government	Regional Population
Area 15 Regional Planning Commission	139,004
Bi-State Regional Commission *	417,741
Chariton Valley Planning & Development Commission	37,889
East Central Intergovernmental Association	196,179
East Central Iowa Council of Governments	385,384
Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments	213,199
Metropolitan Area Planning Agency *	768,720
MIDAS Council of Governments	101,165
North Iowa Area Council of Governments	133,820
Northwest Iowa Planning & Development Commission	140,838
Region 6 Planning Commission	95,041
Region XII Council of Governments	78,441
Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council *	178,792
Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission	112, 922
Southern Iowa Council of Governments	69,302
Southwest Iowa Planning Council	182,531
Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission	86,603
Central Iowa region **	719,069

Source: US Census Bureau

* Agency serves counties in multiple states. Population figures include those counties outside of Iowa.

**Currently, there is no COG located within the Central Iowa region.

IARC and its members are very much able to provide services statewide. COG have demonstrated this over the years, most recently after the natural disaster of 2008, when several COGs came forward to provide recovery services to the seven central Iowa counties. In partnership with the Iowa Finance Authority, COGs have also provided Low Income Housing Tax Credit inspections in some unserved counties.

The challenge for IARC is the not the inability to provide services within central Iowa. Rather, the challenge for IARC is the perception that because no COG exists within the region, that COGs cannot provide services to those counties and communities. This perception can be a deterrent to working with COGs, when agencies are looking at awarding contracts for statewide services.

IARC must continue to educate agencies, communities, and legislators on how COGs operate and how we can serve central Iowa by providing examples of how COGs have done so in the past.

Challenge 2: State budget constraints- Like most states, Iowa has faced severe budget cuts over the past year. Typically, IARC receives an annual allocation from the Iowa Department of Economic Development’s COG Assistance Fund. These funds are then allocated equally to each of the seventeen COGs. This amount has varied from year to year, but IARC has typically received approximately \$200,000 each year through this fund. Over the past year, state agencies have had to reduce spending by eliminating or cutting back funding programs. COG Assistance has been no exception. The amount of COG assistance funds received this current year was a reduction from previous years; The FY 2010 allocation was \$144,000.

However, IARC will receive additional funding next year. The FY 2011 COG Assistance allocation is \$175,000. Funding in this amount has been approved for the next three fiscal years. This is the first time IARC has received a multi-year commitment for COG Assistance Funding. This commitment will be helpful as our members plan for the future.

Opportunity 1: Realignment of state resources- While state budget constraints have been a challenge for IARC, we believe there are opportunities for new initiatives associated with budget cuts. As a cost savings measure, the state of Iowa has offered an early retirement incentive to state employees. Over 2,000 state employees have signed up for this incentive. In addition to a large number of pending retirements, most state agencies have had to lay off staff over the past year. These circumstances create an opportunity for IARC to assist state government by proposing new ways to deliver state services on a regional basis. As agencies look at ways to continue to serve Iowans with considerably fewer employees, IARC and its member COGs are poised to work with agencies to determine how we may fill any service gaps. One of IARC's main priorities over the next year will be meeting individually with state agencies to discuss statewide service delivery. IARC hopes to secure several new contracts for services over the next year.

Opportunity 2: Iowa's Smart Planning Task Force- During the last legislative session, the Iowa Legislature passed a new smart planning bill, which provides guidance and framework for local comprehensive plans. The bill also creates a task force, charged with looking at how the State can encourage planning at the local and regional level. This task force will consist of state leaders, as well as Iowa university leaders, and local leaders. IARC will have a representative on the task force. As the State's planning agencies, the Iowa's focus and interest in regional planning is a benefit to Iowa's COGs. Task force recommendations and discussions have the potential to lead to, and incentives to complete local/regional plans and new funding for COGs. In addition to having representation on the task force, IARC is charged with assisting the Iowa Department of Management with providing staffing assistance to the task force. This role with the task force is an opportunity for IARC to become more visible and opens the door for IARC's involvement in staffing other become involved in staffing other state task forces/ commissions.

Conclusion

In the first year of this project, IARC focused on outreach and visibility. Priorities included meeting with state agencies, and increasing IARC's visibility within state government and the legislature. IARC has been successful in these endeavors, as the last legislative session was likely the most successful ever for the organization. IARC secured its first multi-year funding commitment for COG assistance funding, and has been named to three separate state task forces, which will provide the opportunity for COGs to provide direction and input on statewide planning and disaster case management.

Over the next year, IARC will continue to work marketing and outreach, but will focus on building organizational capacity and generating revenue.

At the May 13, 2010 IARC Director's Retreat, Warren and the IARC Board completed a strategic planning exercise to set priorities and benchmarks for the next year. The planning exercise identified four areas of focus for IARC, along with several objectives for each emphasis area. Below is a summary of IARC's goals and objectives for the upcoming year:

1. Create a development plan for securing future, ongoing funding for IARC staff
 - A. Review IARC membership dues structure and explore creating a tiered membership program, including an associate member program
 - B. Explore using the State's COG assistance funding to support IARC
 - C. Explore a multi-state RPA conference, hosted by IARC
 - D. Contract with other statewide associations for management and administrative services
 - E. Secure new statewide contracts for service delivery through IARC

2. Improve marketing and outreach efforts
 - A. Explore working with NADO to prepare a COG impact report for Iowa
 - B. Establish committees within the IARC Board to meet with leaders/managers of state agencies to discuss possible partnerships and new opportunities
 - C. Develop and conduct a customer service survey for IARC/COG customers
 - D. Look into developing new technical assistance products, such as the Employment Law Handbook
 - E. Improve and revise the IARC website
 - F. Better use of IARC Facebook page and social networking tools

3. Develop and shape Executive Director position
 - A. Develop plan to sustain and fund position after EDA award
 - B. Find additional training opportunities for Executive Director
 - C. Increase communication between Executive Director and IARC lobbyist
 - D. Provide outreach to federal agencies including USDA Rural Development and Federal Highway Administration

4. Provide peer support for IARC members
 - A. Continue orientation program for new Executive Directors
 - B. Offer assistance to state/federal agencies in working with underperforming COGs
 - C. Create annual certification program(s) for COG staff (ie CDBG management certification, etc)
 - D. Increase training/professional development for COG staff

5. Explore and develop new statewide initiatives
 - A. Contact agencies and create a role for IARC/COGs to take over recover work after RIO's sunset date (June 2011)
 - B. Offer association management services to the newly formed Iowa Floodplain and Stormwater Management Association
 - C. Discuss with IDED an allocation of CDBG funding for regional planning and possible suballocation of funding for regional projects
 - D. Explore with state agencies funding for regional infrastructure plans
 - E. Creation of statewide lead testing/ lead abatement program- working with IDPH
 - F. Provide statewide housing policy training

The objectives identified by the board will direct IARC's work and focus for the next year. Some objectives may be carried into year three of this project. Each of the above goals align with the EDA scope of work.

IARC is pleased to have the opportunity to partner with EDA on this project, and to share best practices with other state COG/RPC associations. Work accomplished through this project will not only benefit IARC and its member organizations, but the entire State of Iowa

Attachments

Attachment 1



Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC) Board of Directors

MJ Broomfield, Executive Director at Southwest Iowa Planning Council
Denise Bulat, Executive Director of Bi-State Regional Commission
Tracy Daugherty, Executive Director of Chariton Valley Planning and Development Commission
Kelley Deutmeyer, Executive Director of East Central Intergovernmental Association
Doug Elliott, Executive Director of East Central Iowa Council of Governments
Ellen Foudree, Executive Director of Area 15 Regional Planning Commission
Jane Gilbert, Co-Executive Director of Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council
Rick Hunsaker, Executive Director of Region XII Council of Governments
Sharon Juon, Executive Director of Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments
Ted Kourousis, Executive Director of Northwest Iowa Planning and Development Commission
Wendy Mihm-Herold, Executive Director of Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission
Paul Mullen, Executive Director of Metropolitan Area Planning Agency
Joe Myrhe, Executive Director of North Iowa Area Council of Governments
Tim Ostroski, Executive Director of Southern Iowa Council of Governments
Brian Tapp, Executive Director of Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission
Cliff Weldon, Executive Director of MIDAS Council of Governments
Marty Wymore, Executive Director of Region 6 Planning Commission

Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC) Executive Committee

Chair- Rick Hunsaker, Executive Director of Region XII Council of Governments
Vice Chair- Brian Tapp, Executive Director of Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission
Secretary- Cliff Weldon, Executive Director of MIDAS Council of Governments
Treasurer- Jane Gilbert, Co-Executive Director of Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Commission
Past-Chair- MJ Broomfield, Executive Director at Southwest Iowa Planning Council

Attachment 2

Request for Proposals

Iowa Association of Regional Councils

Association Management



**Prepared by the East Central Iowa Council of Governments on behalf of the
Iowa Association of Regional Councils**

Purpose of this RFP

The Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC) is seeking proposals from qualified firms or individuals to provide dedicated, professional association management. The initial contract period(s) for service(s) will begin on or near March 1, 2009 through February 29, 2012, pending adequate funding from the Bureau of Commerce - Economic Development Administration. We may consider annual contract extensions for periods of twelve months upon completion of the initial contract period.

What is IARC?

IARC is the statewide association for Iowa's Councils of Governments (COGs), and was incorporated in the State of Iowa in February 1988. IARC is a non-profit organization as determined by the Internal Revenue Service. There are seventeen member organizations in IARC.

Each executive director of the member organizations serves on the IARC board of directors. The board of directors meets monthly in Des Moines, Iowa. The organization administers an annual budget of \$235,000, including \$165,000 in pass through activities. The association operates on a July 1 – June 30 fiscal year.

More information about IARC is at www.iarcog.com.

What are COGs?

Created more than thirty years ago by visionary public leaders, Iowa's COGs provide professional planning, programming, and technical assistance to Iowa's cities, counties, businesses, community organizations and Iowans of all ages.

COGs are indigenous organizations formed by counties, cities and towns to serve local governments and their regional citizenry. Their governing boards are comprised of local elected officials, business and education leaders, economic development professionals, and individual citizens.

COGs provide regional planning and technical assistance to local governments and the communities in their regions by:

- Providing individualized assistance to cities, counties, businesses, community organizations and community members (such as a local comprehensive plan, loans to local businesses, grant-writing assistance, and housing and workforce programs);
- Providing planning services across multiple jurisdictions (such as a regional comprehensive solid waste management plan or long-range transportation plan); and
- Providing a forum that combines the elements of transportation planning, housing development, solid waste planning, land use planning, workforce development,

and economic development into a comprehensive approach to regional growth and development

To ensure the vitality and growth of their regions, COGs actively pursue funding opportunities from a variety of local, state, and federal resources. They provide expertise to cities and counties in securing competitive state and federal grants. As Regional Planning Organizations, COGs plan for and program the distribution of federal transportation funds within their regions, including highways, transit, trails, and other enhancement programs. Most COGs also administer regional revolving loan funds targeting housing and economic development.

Services to be Provided under this RFP

The successful respondent for **Association Management** services must be able to provide the following to IARC:

A. Resource Development

- Work closely with other state and federal agencies to identify statewide and/or multi-regional initiatives appropriate for implementation through IARC
- Provide leadership in developing new opportunities for membership in service delivery and programmatic initiatives
- Formulate a development plan and assist with implementation to ensure adequate funding for ongoing staff assistance after the three-year EDA grant funding period
- Other special project administration and activities as identified in strategic plan and mutually determined with board of directors

B. Program Development

- Coordinate annual publication of COG Directory
- Coordinate educational activities, e.g., Staff Retreat, RLF conference, Model Code training
- Coordinate arrangements for other conferences, workshops, and events sponsored by IARC, or in which IARC has a significant role.
- Marketing opportunities – staffing booth at statewide conferences and events as identified
- Design and produce all IARC organizational materials and publications, except Directory.
- Prepare annual salary survey update

C. Board Management/Administration

- Board meeting arrangements – schedule meetings, prepare agenda, contact and confirm presenters, arrange for lunch, reminder calls and email to board members, disseminate agenda.
- Preparation and dissemination of board meeting minutes

- Preparation and dissemination of board meeting materials and packets
- Monthly follow up from each board meeting as needed – correspondence, scheduling additional meetings, sending out information, etc.
- Coordinate arrangements for annual directors’ retreat, strategic plan facilitation and preparation of summary and annual work plan
- Assist board in monitoring state and national trends and identifying new opportunities
- Serve as board’s primary liaison to other state, regional, and national agencies, organizations, and associations
- Maintain an office and/ or point of contact in the Des Moines, Iowa, metropolitan area
- Act as primary point of contact for organization
- COG Assistance administration – tracking requests, documenting, filing, disbursement
- IDPH/IDNR Healthy Iowans Initiative administration - tracking requests, documenting, filing,
- EDA project activities - regular written and oral reports; assisting with financial reports; providing content for IARC website activities
- Manage, route, and respond as appropriate to all written, email , and telephone correspondence on behalf of IARC
- General office functions – copying, postage, fax

Contents of Response to RFP

For a response to be considered by IARC, the following elements must be included:

1. Statement of Qualifications to provide the necessary services noted in this RFP, including:
 - a. a listing and experience of key personnel to provide proposed services
 - b. previous experience in association management, governmental liaison services, or related experience.
2. Narrative description of how you will deliver services.
3. Budget and budget narrative of costs associated with providing the services outlined in this RFP.
4. At least three references, including contact name and phone number.

Submission of Responses

Responses must be received no later than Friday, February 20, 2009. Postmarks will not be accepted. One original and eight (8) copies of the response are required. Send written responses to:

Doug Elliott
Executive Director
East Central Iowa Council of Governments
700 16th Street NE, Suite 301
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402

Questions about this RFP

Questions about this RFP should be addressed to:

Doug Elliott
Executive Director
East Central Iowa Council of Governments
700 16th Street NE, Suite 301
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402
319.365.9941

319.365.9981 (f)

doug.elliott@ecicog.org

All responding firms will be notified in writing regarding the results of the selection process.

IARC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or to waive any irregularities in any proposal. Copies of this RFP are also available at www.ecicog.org

February 2009 Executive Director advertisement

The Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC), a non-profit organization, is seeking an Executive Director. Duties for this part-time, contractual position include 1) develop/strengthen relationships with state and federal agencies/organizations to develop resources that further Association goals; 2) coordinate marketing materials and education opportunities; and 3) coordinate and direct Board activities. Position requires a BA in Community and Regional Planning, Business Administration, or related field. Masters in an area such as Public or Business Administration preferred. Candidate must possess excellent oral/written communication, organization, and computer skills and provide office space. IARC will contract with the successful candidate for \$50,000 to \$55,000 per year depending on experience. Submit a resume and 3 professional references to East Central Iowa Council of Governments, 700 – 16th Street NE, Suite 301, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402 by Friday, March 27, 2009.

Nichole Warren

mnkwarren1@msn.com

1123 Sandalwood Ct. SW, Altoona, Iowa 50009

515.967.0056

CAREER EXPERIENCE

Iowa Association of Regional Councils (2009-current) Altoona, Iowa

Executive Director

Responsible for operations of the Iowa Association of Regional Councils, the statewide, professional organization for Iowa's Councils of Governments. Identifies new opportunities for collaboration and capacity building for the association and Iowa's Councils of Governments. Serve as liaison to regional, state and federal agencies and organizations. Work with state and federal agencies to develop statewide and multi-regional initiatives for implementation through the association. Develops and prepares marketing materials. Oversee statewide IARC projects and contracts, including all grant administration. Responsible for board management and coordination.

Iowa Department of Economic Development (2000-2009) Des Moines, Iowa

Project Manager/ Workforce Coordinator

Supervised the Department's Workforce Development programs administered in conjunction with Iowa's community colleges. Directed Program Manager work activities. Represented the Department and presented information to the Department's board, Legislative committees, and development groups. Worked with businesses, communities, and economic developers to create financial incentive packages for companies. Managed two business financial assistance programs, including federal funded program. Reviewed applications for financial assistance on behalf of Iowa businesses.

Vision Iowa Program Manager

Responsible for the administration of the State's Vision Iowa and Community Attraction and Tourism financial assistance programs. Served as a liaison between the public and the Vision Iowa Board. Coordinated Vision Iowa Board meetings. Developed agendas and meeting materials. Provided training and technical assistance to communities and organizations seeking funding. Developed materials necessary for program implementation, including administrative rules, reports, and documents for the Vision Iowa website. Answered inquiries from the public, media and legislature regarding the Vision Iowa and Community Attraction and Tourism programs.

Project Manager

Administered the Department's Brownfield Redevelopment grant program. Managed the State's Housing Enterprise Zone tax incentive program for affordable housing projects. Prepared and administered contracts for the Vision Iowa and Community Attraction and Tourism programs to ensure program compliance. Provided technical assistance to program applicants and award recipients.

Region XII Council of Governments (1998-2000)
Carroll, Iowa

Community and Economic Development Planner

Monitored and administered numerous state and federal grants, including Community Development Block Grants. Managed a \$1.5 million economic development revolving loan fund. Developed a wide variety of planning documents and grant applications.

Sears Regional Credit Card Center (1997-1998)
West Des Moines, Iowa

Account Services Team Manager

Supervised sixteen account services representatives. Implemented on-going training for account services representatives. Demonstrated strong problem solving and communication skills through interaction with customers.

LEADERSHIP ROLES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

One Source Operating Team member, Junior Achievement Program Volunteer, Salvation Army Advisory Board member, Development & Community Relations Committee Chair for the Salvation Army, Everybody Wins Program Volunteer, Altoona Elementary PTA member and volunteer

EDUCATION

Northwest Missouri State University, May 1997

Bachelor of Science in Public Administration, Minor in Economics

Drake University

Graduate work in the Master of Public Administration Program

Attachment 4

SERVICE AGREEMENT

This Service Agreement (Agreement) is entered into by the Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC), located at 1501 SW 7th Street, Atlantic, Iowa 50022 and Nichole Warren (Contractor), located at 1123 Sandalwood Court SW, Altoona, Iowa 50009.

The parties hereby agree to the following terms, conditions and provisions:

TERM

The term of this Agreement shall begin on May 1, 2009 and end June 30, 2010 or when terminated by either party as hereinafter provided or by mutual agreement.

SERVICES AND DELIVERABLES

Contractor shall provide IARC the following services and deliverables:

D. Resource Development

- Work closely with other state and federal agencies to identify statewide and/or multi-regional initiatives appropriate for implementation through IARC
- Provide leadership in developing new opportunities for membership in service delivery and programmatic initiatives
- Formulate a development plan and assist with implementation to ensure adequate funding for ongoing staff assistance after the three-year EDA grant funding period
- Other special project administration and activities as identified in strategic plan and mutually determined with board of directors

E. Program Development

- Coordinate annual publication of COG Directory
- Coordinate educational activities, e.g., Staff Retreat, RLF conference, Model Code training
- Coordinate arrangements for other conferences, workshops, and events sponsored by IARC, or in which IARC has a significant role.
- Marketing opportunities – staffing booth at statewide conferences and events as identified
- Design and produce all IARC organizational materials and publications, except Directory.
- Prepare annual salary survey update

F. Board Management/Administration

- Board meeting arrangements – schedule meetings, prepare agenda, contact and confirm presenters, arrange for lunch, reminder calls and email to board members, disseminate agenda.
- Preparation and dissemination of board meeting minutes
- Preparation and dissemination of board meeting materials and packets

- Monthly follow up from each board meeting as needed – correspondence, scheduling additional meetings, sending out information, etc.
- Coordinate arrangements for annual directors’ retreat, strategic plan facilitation and preparation of summary and annual work plan
- Assist board in monitoring state and national trends and identifying new opportunities
- Serve as board’s primary liaison to other state, regional, and national agencies, organizations, and associations
- Maintain an office and/ or point of contact in the Des Moines, Iowa, metropolitan area
- Act as primary point of contact for organization
- COG Assistance administration – tracking requests, documenting, filing, disbursement
- IDPH/IDNR Healthy Iowans Initiative administration - tracking requests, documenting, filing,
- EDA project activities - regular written and oral reports; assisting with financial reports; providing content for IARC website activities
- Manage, route, and respond as appropriate to all written, email , and telephone correspondence on behalf of IARC
- General office functions – copying, postage, fax

PAYMENT TERMS

IARC shall pay Contractor \$61,250 for the fourteen month period (\$4,375 monthly) from May 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010 and shall be paid bi-monthly on the business day closest to the 1st and 15th of each month. IARC shall reimburse Contractor for up to \$2,000 in reasonable expenses incurred during the term of this Agreement in connection with the performance of its services (such as related mileage outside of Polk County at the state mileage rate (currently \$.55 per mile), postage, copies, and supplies) upon submission of proper documentation and such other expenses as IARC may approve in advance.

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR

Contractor’s status in all matters pursuant to this Agreement shall be that of an independent contractor. Contractor will not directly or indirectly represent or imply in any way that Contractor is an employee of IARC. Contractor is not eligible for IARC employee benefits or any other considerations of IARC employment. Contractor is not entitled to privileges, services, facilities, and benefits that are available to IARC’s employees.

TERMINATION

Without cause, either party may terminate this Agreement after giving 30 days prior written notice to the other.

NOTICES

Formal notices required herein shall be sent by postal or email with return receipt requested to the addresses noted above.

TITLE AND OWNERSHIP OF WORKS MADE FOR HIRE

The parties agree that new, original, and custom-developed works produced by Contractor pursuant to this Agreement shall be works made for hire and shall become the sole property of IARC. Title and ownership thereto shall belong to and vest exclusively in IARC.

NON-DISCLOSURE AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

Contractor shall protect and maintain the confidentiality of IARC and its members, reports, data, information, systems, documentation, and the like, whether reduced to writing or otherwise provided to Contractor by reason of this Agreement.

AGREEMENT TO NON CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Contractor shall not contract with other individuals, businesses, governments, agencies, etc. that may be a competitor or represent a position inconsistent with the IARC mission and goals.

COMPLIANCE WITH GOVERNING LAWS

Contractor and IARC shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations related to Contractor services.

SUBCONTRACTING AND ASSIGNMENT

No work performed pursuant to this Agreement may be sub-contracted in whole or in part by Contractor without the prior written consent of IARC. Notwithstanding any such consent by IARC, Contractor shall be and remain solely and completely liable to IARC for all work performed.

This Agreement may not be assigned or otherwise transferred by Contractor without the prior written consent of IARC.

GOVERNING LAW

This Agreement shall be governed, construed, and interpreted under the laws of the State of Iowa.

INDEMNIFICATION

Contractor agrees to indemnify and save harmless IARC from all claims, suits, damages, costs, losses, and expenses, in any manner resulting from or arising out of performance of this Agreement.

ENTIRE AGREEMENT; AMENDMENT

This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties with regard to the subject matter hereof, and supersedes any prior oral or written agreements regarding the same.

This Agreement may be amended only by an instrument in writing and signed by authorized representatives of both parties.

The terms, conditions and provisions of this Agreement are hereby

AGREED TO AND APPROVED BY:

IOWA ASSOCIATION OR REGIONAL COUNCILS

MJ Broomfield, Chair

Date

NICHOLE WARREN

Date

IARC FY 2010 Goals and objectives

1. Improve IARC's financial stability

- A. Secure a permanent funding source for COG assistance
- B. Increase funding to individual COGs
- C. Explore federal stimulus funding, including EDA Brownfield funding and Lead Based Paint funding through IDEED, and funding through the Office of Energy Independence.

2. Increase IARC's statewide visibility

- A. Document IARC's progress through reports and website (EDA award)
- B. Develop Fact Sheets outlining the role of the COGs and their impact on Iowa
- C. Establish "face time" with state and federal agencies to discuss services offered by COGs and possible new opportunities
- D. Prepare press releases on IARC initiatives and events
- E. Become involved in the statewide comprehensive planning initiative

3. Develop initiatives to build IARC's capacity

- A. Explore developing/ updating the Employee Handbook
- B. Sub-allocation of CDBG funds
- C. Create a role for IARC in state government reorganization initiative
- D. Create "Centers of Expertise". Develop/improve information sharing among the COGs.
- E. Work to become a statewide educational resource (RLFs, etc.)
- F. Explore having an impact report prepared by NADO
- G. Address lack of COG presence in Central Iowa

Attachment 6



**Iowa Association of
Regional Councils**

Created more than thirty years ago, Iowa's Councils of Governments (COGs) provide professional planning, programming, and technical assistance to Iowa's cities, counties, businesses, community organizations and Iowans of all ages. The Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC) is the statewide professional association for Iowa's Councils of Governments (COGs). IARC is a non-profit organization that works to enhance services provided to Iowa's local governments through Iowa's COGs.

The Employment Law Handbook is a personnel summary guide for Iowa cities and counties and addresses issues relating to hiring, workplace administration and termination for public employers. In the past, the Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC) collaborated with the Iowa Department of Economic Development and other organizations to produce and distribute the Employment Law Handbook. Since originally prepared in 1995, IARC has become responsible for updating and distributing the handbook. The Handbook was most recently updated in November 2009 by Von Bokern Associates, Inc.

Human Resource issues have changed dramatically since the last update in 2005. Issues addressed in the 2009-10 Employment Law Handbook include changes in age discrimination laws, ADA, FLSA, FMLA and numerous other issues of concern to all public sector employers.

Based on the expense involved and the past pricing structure, **the charge for the fully updated Handbook is \$125.** To order your copy of the 2009-10 Employment Law Handbook, please complete the attached form and return it with your check to the Iowa Association of Regional Councils at your earliest convenience. The Handbook will be sent to you as soon as possible.

Please contact Nichole Warren, Executive Director of the Iowa Association of Regional Councils, with any questions you may have. Nichole may be reached at 515.554.3210 or via email at iarcdirector@live.com. Thank you in advance for your order.

.....

2009-10 Employment Law Handbook Order Form

Name _____

City or County _____

Address _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ Email address _____

Please return form & check to: **Iowa Association of Regional Councils, 1123 Sandalwood Ct. SW, Altoona, Iowa 50009**

Please make checks payable to: Iowa Association of Regional Councils

Attachment 7

Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC)

Iowa Office of Energy Independence Community Grants program Project Plan

Goal

Develop a community energy reduction and sustainability planning model that can be replicated statewide. Create a team of planning staff available to assist communities with energy planning.

Iowa Association of Regional Councils and Iowa's Councils of Governments

Created more than thirty years ago, Iowa's Councils of Governments (COGs) provide professional planning, programming, and technical assistance to Iowa's cities, counties, businesses, and community organizations. COGs are indigenous organizations formed by counties, cities and towns to serve local governments and their regional citizenry. Their governing boards are made up of local elected officials, business and education leaders, economic development professionals, and individual citizens.

COGs provide regional planning and technical assistance to local governments and the communities in their regions by:

- Providing individualized assistance to cities, counties, businesses, community organizations and community members (such as a local comprehensive plan, loans to local businesses, grant-writing assistance, and housing and workforce programs)
- Providing planning services across multiple jurisdictions (such as a regional comprehensive solid waste management plan or long-range transportation plan); and
- Providing a forum that combines the elements of transportation planning, housing development, solid waste planning, and use planning, workforce development, and economic development into a comprehensive approach to regional growth and development.

To ensure the vitality and growth of their regions, COGs actively pursue funding opportunities from a variety of local, state, and federal resources. They provide expertise to cities and counties in securing competitive state and federal grants. As Regional Planning Affiliations, COGs plan for and program the distribution of federal transportation funds within their regions, including highways, transit, trails, and other enhancement programs. Most COGs also have established and administer regional revolving loan funds targeting housing and economic development.

The Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC) is the statewide, professional association for Iowa's Councils of Governments (COGs), and was incorporated in the State of Iowa in February 1988. IARC is a non-profit organization, as determined by the Internal Revenue Service. IARC includes 17 member organizations. Each executive director of the member organizations serves on the IARC Board of Directors.

Project Plan/ Description

The Iowa Association of Regional Councils, in conjunction with its member Councils of Governments, have selected 5 communities that have the desire to complete and implement a community energy plan: Harlan, Creston, Fayette, Belle Plaine, and Webster City. These communities will provide a \$1,500 cash match to assist with planning effort and to demonstrate commitment to the project goals. Letters of commitment are attached to this application.

Multiple COGs will work on the 5 plans to encourage cross training, collaboration, and problem solving. A lead COG will be assigned to each of the 5 communities. Planning teams will include staff with expertise in the areas of housing, transportation, land use, infrastructure development, economic development, public transit, and energy policy.

IARC will work with the Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities or another provider to conduct a community energy audit in each of the selected communities. Once completed, audit information will be incorporated into development of the community's plan. Reference information will be available to planning staff as the model plan is developed, such as the state of Oregon's energy planning tool.

The model community plan will include, at minimum:

- A community energy analysis
- Goals and objectives,
- An action plan with a timeline for completion
- A funding and implementation strategy
- An evaluation process/tool

COG staff will utilize various resources in developing a planning model for the pilot communities. Staff will review information on best practices from other states as well as sustainability efforts made in other communities nationwide. Information from the Association of Municipal Utilities, Iowa's utility companies, ISU Extension, the Iowa Energy Center, other state energy reduction programs (i.e. Oregon) and national entities, such as the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) will be collected and integrated into the plan.

A local planning committee will be developed to assist in developing the community energy plan. COG staff will coordinate the local planning committees and facilitate the planning process. Local committees will include city officials, members of the business community, school district representatives, civic/community groups, and citizens. The plan will focus not only on energy audit findings, but will incorporate longer-term goals and activities aimed at reducing energy consumption. IARC will provide all planning materials developed to OEI, to document work completed.

While outside of the 6-month grant timeframe, IARC will work with participating communities to monitor progress over time. We may look at establishing a competition between the communities to determine which community achieves the most energy reduction. This would be a longer-term competition (2 + years after the plan is in place).

Upon completion of this project, the five pilot communities will have a community energy plan and resources to assist with meeting plan goals and objectives. The communities' COG will continue to work with the community, beyond the timeframe of this project, to provide technical assistance and assist with plan implementation. The COG will be available to prepare necessary funding applications, and assist with plan updates or revisions.

This project will provide IARC and Iowa's COGs with a planning model that can be replicated in each planning region statewide. While communities typically plan for land use, infrastructure development, and housing needs, it is important for communities to realize the importance of energy planning and how energy

consumption impacts all other community planning and projects. Through developing a model plan and coordinating resources, COGs will have the ability to help Iowa communities develop sustainable energy practices.

The Iowa Association of Regional Councils has been in contact with the Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities regarding the proposed project. IARC believes there is an opportunity to work with IAMU on this project and future energy-related initiatives. IARC will continue to visit with IAMU regarding partnership opportunities.

Project Budget

Cost Estimates	Anticipated Funding Sources	
	Iowa Power Fund	Other Funding Sources
Salaries and Benefits	\$20,000	\$25,000
Administrative Costs		
Professional Services	\$15,000	\$7,500
Materials Cost	\$1,000	
Equipment Cost		
Indirect cost*		\$3,600
Other Costs (please list separately)		
*no more than 10% of the project funds can be spent on indirect costs.		
Subtotals	\$36,000	\$36,100
Iowa Power Fund and Project Applicant total project contribution percentage	50%	50%

Budget Assumptions:

- Assumes 5 staff members statewide working on the project for 250 hours, using an hourly rate of \$36/ hour.
- Indirect cost line item would assist with IARC's assistance and administration. Assumes IARC staff time at \$40/ hour for 90 hours.
- Assumes each community energy audit would cost \$4,500.
- Each participating community would provide a \$1,500 cash match, for a total of \$7,500 in local funds.

Current community initiatives

The proposed project is a natural next step for the 5 pilot communities. These communities were selected based on not only their commitment to the project and planning process, but on their interest in energy reduction and sustainability efforts. IARC believes this project will build on existing work and initiatives already underway in our participating communities. Below is a description of efforts in the proposed pilot communities.

Harlan

The City of Harlan, Shelby County, Harlan Municipal Utilities, Myrtue Medical Center, Harlan Community Schools, and other agencies based in Harlan have been actively working on energy reduction efforts. To date, such efforts have been independent of each other. A more coordinated, community wide approach to energy reduction is necessary.

To date, work either underway or proposed in Harlan includes:

- Evaluation of a new heating system to replace inefficient boiler at the county courthouse
- Planned installation of a new energy efficient computer server system at the county courthouse
- Energy efficient lighting upgrade for courthouse square
- Geothermal heating and cooling for the new recreation center
- Evaluation of signage to improve traffic flow in the city and to downtown
- New housing development utilizing easy access to existing utilities and streets
- Door and window retrofits
- Evaluation of energy efficient design/construction for new Harland Municipal Utilities building
- Upgrade of electrical substations
- Burying of electrical distribution lines
- Construction of a new water treatment facility with nano-filtration technology
- Study of city wide trail system

Creston

The City of Creston reviewed its entire traffic signal system, including flashing lights and crosswalk lights to determine how the community could reduce its energy costs. The City also concentrated on street lighting in the uptown area. The City is applying for \$75,000 in EECBG funding to replace streetlights in the uptown area (122) and the traffic signals, including flashing lights and school crossings in town.

As future funding is available, other areas of the city may be targeted for such studies, based on the success of savings in the uptown area. The City of Creston has been monitoring public electricity usage and feels this project presents a cost-effective approach to reducing energy use.

Fayette

The city of Fayette plans to work closely with Upper Iowa University through the community energy planning process.

To date, work completed in Fayette includes:

- Energy efficient flooring heat and hot water heater installed at new fire station
- Energy efficient hot water heater installed at community sports complex
- New energy efficient lighting and furnace installed in library
- New energy efficient lighting on Main Street
- City tree planting initiative in downtown and throughout community

Webster City

The city of Webster City has implemented energy savings programs that benefit its customers. The proposed project would allow the city to expand energy conservation efforts and savings by looking more directly at city usage.

To date, work completed in Webster City includes:

- Development of an energy rebate program- Webster City will pay up to 50% of an item's cost (capped at \$75.00) with a household cap of \$150.00. This includes energy efficient appliances, programmable thermostats, etc. Last year, the city exhausted the entire \$25,000 allocated to this program. This year, the city budgeted \$50,000 for the program and expects to exhaust all funds. While the first two years of the program were only open to residential customers, small commercial businesses are now eligible to participate in the program.
- Creating a community florescent light bulb program, which allows residents to purchase energy efficient light bulbs of all types from the city. The city sells these at cost.
- Development of a water savings program
- Completion of an energy audits of the community's 4 largest industries, focused on electric and gas usage

Attachment 8

Iowa Department of Public Health/Iowa Association of Regional Councils Commitment Form

IDPH will:	IARC/COG will:
Provide \$24,000 funding each year of the of the community/school portion of the project. IDPH will assist with selecting the COGs.	Designate \$4000 funding to each of the six COGs with a funded project to support the efforts in the funded community.
Provide \$60,000 funding for each year of the community/school portion of the project. IDPH will assist with selecting the communities and schools.	Select and coordinate six communities across the state (\$10,000 each in year 1) to coordinate implementation of the community toolkit by building or utilizing an existing local coalition where local public health is an active member. The community will agree to add the school toolkit component in year 2 in a minimum of one elementary school.
Review budget and evaluation plan, provide any necessary feedback.	Submit a budget plan and an evaluation plan for each funded community to IDPH by December 31, 2009.
Provide and coordinate technical assistance.	Agree to the following technical assistance: Quarterly group TA calls with IDPH Health Promotion staff and members of the funded community coalition and their designated COG representative; a minimum of one site visit to the community and school by IDPH Health Promotion staff.
Provide funding for training. Assist is training set up with Iowa Network for Community Agriculture (INCA).	Use grant funds to provide training on the Iowans Fit for Life Mapping Tools. INCA will provide the training for all funded COGS.
Provide \$16,235 funding. Review budget and action plan for activities.	Disperse remaining funds to Regional COGs for nutrition, physical activity efforts, or built environments or fund projects in these subject areas. Submit a budget and description of activities for these remaining funds by November 30, 2009.
Provide nutrition and physical activity environmental assessment	Complete a nutrition and physical activity environmental assessment in each COG twice annually.
Pursue additional funding opportunities to sustain the project.	Work cooperatively with IDPH to pursue additional funding opportunities to sustain the project.

Community Component (Year 1)

IDPH will:	IARC/COG will:	Community will:
Provide asset mapping tools, assist with asset mapping training, provide any needed technical assistance, review action plans.	Conduct a community planning process including determining appropriate community partners, establishing a steering committee, completing asset mapping, coordinate an action plan and assist with action plan implementation .	Provide suggestions of location for and encourage participation of key community members(including school representatives) in an asset mapping process to determine strategies.
Provide technical assistance.	Coordinate/help facilitate a community coalition for nutrition and physical activity. The coalition will continue for the two years of the project period.	Actively participate in the community coalition.
Provide information on Live Healthy Iowa.	Assist communities in the recruitment of Live Healthy Iowa teams.	Encourage businesses and community members to for Live Healthy Iowa teams.
Provide billboard templates in the community to support nutrition and physical activity.	Assist with location of billboards and/or other advertising space that will support nutrition and physical activity messages provided by IDPH.	Assist with location of billboards and/or other advertising space that will support nutrition and physical activity messages provided by IDPH.
Provide Pick a better snack™ promotional materials to grocery store(s) and businesses in the community.	Encourage grocery store to use promotional materials provided by IDPH.	Encourage grocery store to use promotional materials provided by IDPH.
Provide weekly articles to local newspapers and other organizations for their newsletters.	Encourage local newspaper to print weekly newspaper articles provided by IDPH.	Encourage local newspaper to print weekly newspaper articles provided by IDPH.

School Component (Year 2)

IDPH will:	IARC/COG will:	School will:
Provide the school health index to evaluate the school nutrition and physical activity environment.	Provide the school health index to the school to evaluate the school nutrition and physical activity environment.	Complete the school health index at the beginning and end of the project.
Provide non-financial resources for a kick-off event.	Provide resources and assist with integrating the community into a kick-off event.	Conduct a kick-off event to begin the project in the school.
Provide ICN training to teachers and staff on Pick a better snack & ACT curriculum and materials.	Share training materials with schools.	Agree to have teachers and staff participate in training on Pick a better snack & ACT curriculum and materials.
Provide electronically Pick a better snack™ & ACT curriculum to teachers in all grades.	Provide Pick a better snack™ & ACT curriculum to teachers in all grades.	Agree to teach two lessons per month from the Pick a better snack™ & ACT curriculum (approximately 30 minutes each).
Provide electronically Pick a better snack™ & ACT monthly BINGO and score cards to students in all grades and assist with bulk printing	Distribute Pick a better snack™ & ACT monthly BINGO and score cards to schools.	Distribute Pick a better snack™ & ACT monthly BINGO and score cards to students.
Provide suggestions for incentives to complete the bingo and scorecards.	Assist the school and community with identifying possible incentives.	Provide incentives for bingo and score card completion to the students.
Provide electronically monthly newsletters to send home with students reinforcing nutrition and physical activity messages.	Distribute monthly newsletter supporting nutrition and physical activity to schools.	Distribute monthly newsletter supporting nutrition and physical activity to students.
Provide technical assistance with the implementation of the program. Provide assessment materials.	Serve as a liaison between IDPH and the school.	Complete a pre and post assessment with the students.
Provide information about Live Healthy Iowa, Live Healthy Iowa Kids, and the Governor's Challenge.	Provide information about Live Healthy Iowa, Live Healthy Iowa Kids, and the Governor's Challenge.	Implement Live Healthy Iowa, Live Healthy Iowa Kids, and the Governor's Challenge.
Provide Walking with a Purpose a school-based walkability assessment.	Provide Walking with a Purpose a school-based walkability assessment.	Utilize Walking with a Purpose a school-based walkability assessment.



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.

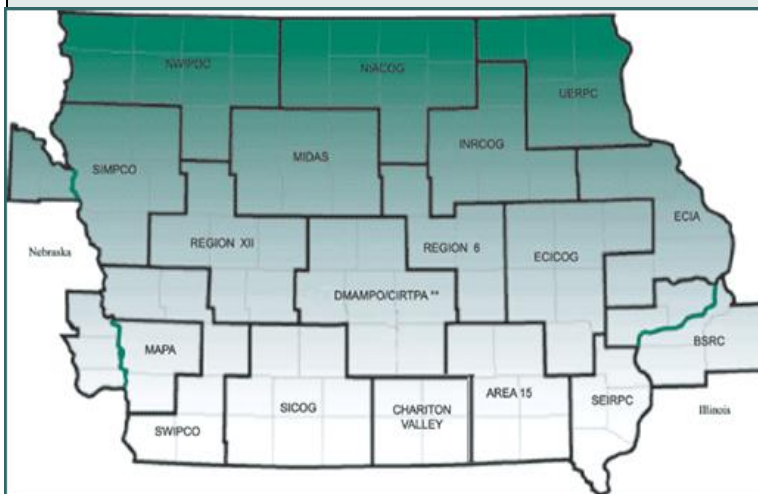
Iowa's COGs are flexible and experienced service providers as proven by their involvement in the 1993 and 2008 disasters. COGs swiftly developed programs to utilize American Reinvestment and Recovery Act and I-JOBS funding to support disaster recovery efforts. COGs have the capacity and leadership necessary 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.



IARC

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515.554.3210



I o w a A s s o c i a t i o n o f
R e g i o n a l C o u n c i l s

2009 IARC Staff Retreat Schedule of Events

**September 17-18th
Courtyard by Marriott
Ankeny, Iowa**

Thursday, September 17th

8:30 AM- 10:30 AM- Registration

10:30 AM - 12:00 Noon- Session 1 (Concurrent Sessions)

Housing Trust Funds- Courtyard Meeting Room

Frank Owens with Iowa State University Extension will discuss how to establish a Local Housing Trust Fund and the steps included in the process. Terri Rosonke with the Iowa Finance Authority will discuss the State Housing Trust Fund program, and how the program funds Local Housing Trust Funds.

I-JOBS Overview- Salon I

Lori Beary with the Iowa Finance Authority and Stu Anderson with the Iowa Department of Transportation will discuss the new I-JOBS program and funding opportunities associated with the program.

12:00 Noon to 1:30 PM- Lunch

Lunch will be served in the Courtyard Café.

1:30 PM to 3:00 PM- Session 2 (Concurrent Sessions)

TIF & Tax Abatement- Salon II

Attorney Bob Josten with Dorsey & Whitney, LLP, will discuss tax increment financing (TIF) and tax abatement and how communities can use these tools to stimulate economic development.

CDBG & Sustainable Development- Salon I

Benton Quade with the Iowa Department of Economic will present on the Department's new CDBG component for Sustainable Development. Other CDBG related issues may be discussed.

3:00- 3:30- Break

3:30 to 5:00 PM- Session 3 (Concurrent Sessions)

Iowa Power Fund- Salon I

Brian Crowe with the Iowa Office of Energy Independence will provide an overview of the Iowa Power Fund and explain how this program can be used to assist communities and businesses with energy independence efforts.

Zoning- Basics and Beyond- Courtyard Meeting Room

Gary Taylor, Assistant Professor & Extension Specialist with Iowa State University, will provide an overview of zoning in Iowa and answer specific questions regarding today's zoning issues faced by Iowa communities.

Housing Roundtable Discussion- Salon II

This roundtable will provide COG staff an opportunity to visit with colleagues about regional housing issues, best practices, and other housing related issues facing COGs.

Friday, September 18th

8:00 AM- 9:00 AM- Breakfast & Registration

Breakfast will be available in Salon I.

9:00 AM-10:30 AM- Session 1 (Concurrent Sessions)

Model Code Training- Salon I

Attorney Bill Blum will present the 2010 Model Code of Ordinances and issues facing local governments. He will also answer questions regarding codification and local ordinances.

Please bring any questions you may have or issues you would like to discuss to this session.

Iowa's Stimulus Funds- Courtyard Meeting Room

Karla Peiffer with USDA Rural Development and Stu Anderson with the Iowa Department of Transportation will discuss federal stimulus funding within their agencies and opportunities associated with these funds. Information will also be available from the Iowa Office of Energy Independence.

Jumpstart Housing Discussion- Salon II

This session will focus on the State's Jumpstart Housing program. Representatives from IDED and SBA will be invited to attend to facilitate discussion and answer questions.

10:30 AM- 10:45 AM- Break

10:45 AM- 12:15 PM- Session 2 (Concurrent Sessions)

Model Code Training- Salon I

This session is a continuation of the Model Code Training from Session 1.

Hazard Mitigation Financial Assistance- Courtyard Meeting Room

John Wageman with Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management will discuss the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and other FEMA funded mitigation programs.

Jumpstart Housing Discussion- Salon II

This session is a continuation of the Jumpstart Housing Discussion from Session 1.

Thank you for attending the 2009 IARC Staff Retreat!

A special thank you to the 2009 IARC Planning Committee: Steve Hallgren (NWIPDC), Chelsey Waterman (Bi-State) and Kristi Quinn (SIMPCO). Thank you for your help and input!

Also a special thank you to Chris Whitaker (Region XII), Myrtle Nelson (NIACOG), and Laurie Gilbert (Region XII) for their assistance with coordinating sessions. It is appreciated!

An evaluation survey will be sent out after the retreat. Your input is valuable, and is needed as we start to plan future retreats and trainings.

Attachment 11

2009 IARC Staff Retreat Survey Results

Note- 39 attendees completed the survey.

1. How would you rate the hotel/facility used for the 2009 IARC Staff retreat? Please consider location & amenities. (39 responses)

Excellent- 69%

Good- 31%

Fair- 0%

Poor 0%

2. Please rate the quality and content of the sessions you attended at the 2009 IARC Staff Retreat.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	I did not attend this session	# of Responses
Housing Trust Funds	0.0% (0)	11.8% (4)	5.9% (2)	0.0% (0)	82.4% (28)	34
I-JOBS Overview	8.6% (3)	37.1% (13)	22.9% (8)	2.9% (1)	28.6% (10)	35
TIF & Tax Abatement	30.3% (10)	15.2% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	54.5% (18)	33
CDBG & Sustainable Development	0.0% (0)	28.6% (10)	5.7% (2)	5.7% (2)	60.0% (21)	35
Iowa Power Fund	0.0% (0)	16.1% (5)	6.5% (2)	0.0% (0)	77.4% (24)	31
Zoning-Basics & Beyond	24.2% (8)	12.1% (4)	6.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	57.6% (19)	33
Housing Roundtable Discussion	14.3% (5)	14.3% (5)	2.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	68.6% (24)	35

Model Code Training	6.1% (2)	15.2% (5)	0.0% (0)	3.0% (1)	75.8% (25)	33
Iowa's Stimulus Funds	9.1% (3)	27.3% (9)	12.1% (4)	3.0% (1)	48.5% (16)	33
Jumpstart Housing Discussion	13.9% (5)	13.9% (5)	2.8% (1)	2.8% (1)	66.7% (24)	36
Hazard Mitigation Financial Assistance	6.3% (2)	31.3% (10)	3.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	59.4% (19)	32

3. What topics would you like to see included on future IARC Staff Retreat agendas? Please include any suggestions for future speakers/presenters. (15 responses)

1. Fun social activities for COGs to interact
2. GIS should be an annual topic or at least every other year. CEDS best practices would be interesting, including discussion of other economic development planning and site planning- round table. Development of housing needs assessment and/or hazard mitigation plans- round table. Grantsmanship- presentation or roundtable.

3. A couple of times in the past there were sessions for financial personnel that were very helpful.

4. Would like to get back to panels with COG staff in some sessions to share best practices, etc.

Also something on the use of new technology (Facebook, Twitter, etc) for COG outreach efforts

5. retain the round table- sharing was good.

6. Round table discussions are good only if they are productive and have a positive outcome. Planning and zoning is always good to dig into with different options.

7. Financial, billing programs, allocation, etc.

8. More transportation related topics.

9. Possibly some tracts to include transportation planning staff, hazard mitigation staff, and others that maybe didn't attend.

10. Pedestrian and bicycle planning; complete streets; park and recreation planning; traffic safety planning; don't keep having sessions on funding opportunities only, include actual planning sessions. Also need to have a session on what sustainable development/communities are and components - there are plenty of examples (ordinance language, planning concepts, building, etc.) - how can members go out to their communities and inform them there is now a CDBG green streets and sustainable development monies if they don't have a clue as to what it is. Maybe have a session on trails and creating a bikeable community with Cedar Falls being an example/presenter--they shouldn't be the only community in the state doing this.

11. I'm getting calls from small towns that have dilapidated commercial buildings in the downtown area. They can't afford to declare a nuisance and tear them down. What can we do.

12, Housing, but yikes if we're still doing Jumpstart!

13. Hazard Mitigation Roundtable discussion.

14. Nuisance Abatement

15. Green Development plans for multi family or new construction

4. Do you find roundtable discussions with peers valuable? (36 responses)

Yes- 94%

No- 6%

5. Which format would you prefer to see at an IARC Staff Retreat? (39 responses)

Mainly presentations from speakers- 8%

Mainly round table discussions among peers on various issues- 5%

A combination of both of the above- 87%

Comments:

- Except for the occasional roundtable that turns into a gripe session, it's great to have the opportunity to ask others how they handle different matters.
- Continue with same format as this year with plenty of time between speakers
- Should organize an evening meal/activity to keep people together and encourage socializing, which helps to develop relationships and make staff feel more comfortable with peers.
- I think panel sessions with experts and state officials prove to be the most useful sessions.

6. Please provide any other comments you may have on the 2009 IARC Staff Retreat. (16 responses)

1. It would be nice to be able to get AICP continuing maintenance credits
2. The lunch period was way too long for the quantity of food that was provided. I would have rather had 1 hour lunch and been done early or provided another mini session
3. I thought the retreat was well-attended and went reasonably smoothly.
4. Ran Very Smooth!
5. Overall - GREAT JOB!!!!!!!!!!
6. My first one, I found it informative
7. I thought the retreat was excellent. Thank you for all your hard work
8. Loved the location and format. Good time of year to hold it. 1 1/2 days was good for travel allowance
9. None at this time
10. Not a big deal, but I thought the breakfast could have had more variety. Hey, just feed me and I'm happy
11. Presenters did a great job and roundtables were wonderful
12. A list of all the attendees is helpful. Also, a social would be a good way for people to first get to know staff from the other COGs.
13. Good Job!!
14. Overall Great Job!
15. It would be useful if IARC would provide a list of all attendees, including the COG they work at and contact information, as it was hard to write this info. down off name tags.

7. What other types of training should IARC consider providing to COG staff? (11 responses)

1. Integrate more general motivational speaker would be nice
2. Intro into website development maybe a good half-day course. Most cogs have them but if the staffer that created them leaves, we don't have the people in-house to do this
3. Two suggestions: First, NADO's CEDS Training is very useful and might merit consideration (Know Your Region). Second, we might want to do something for the CERCs who may or may not be working for us at the end of 2010.
4. Know Your Regions as presented at NADO. EDA or Land Use Planner meetings similiar to the RPA/MPO meetings where planners working on similiar type projects can discuss new trends or best practices.
5. Our financial department would be interested in attending a training.

6. More networking and staff development opportunities.
7. AICP certification, how to facilitate meetings, strategic planning methods - goal setting and visioning meetings - how to engage the audience, how to prepare and give effective presentations - i.e. visuals/handouts (ways to communicate ideas), mapping skills/data sources.
8. Perhaps something related to revolving loan fund or CDBG administration.
9. Everything I mentioned previously---we are the 'go to' planners for our communities and we don't know the most up-to-date issues or trends--what happened to Iowa?
10. Have this meeting in conjunction with the League meeting. It kills two birds with one stone and exposes the staff to lots of other City stuff.



Iowa Association of Regional Councils Know Your Region Workshop



The Iowa Association of Regional Councils will host the EDA Know Your Region Workshop on April 15, 2010 from 9 am – 4 pm at the Hotel Fort Des Moines in Des Moines, Iowa.

Attend this day long workshop to enhance your skills and capacity to *Know Your Region*. The workshop is based on the Economic Development Administration's *Know Your Region* curriculum which addresses regional and local approaches to economic innovation and competitiveness across the United States. The *Know Your Region* workshop will provide valuable information to help local officials, economic development practitioners, community leaders and citizens assess local and regional assets, needs and visions in a global context, leading to long-term regional prosperity and sustainability.

During the course of the day, you will learn about useful existing (*and free*) data resources that can be used throughout your comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) processes, including how to find the most current and relevant data, and how to use it throughout the planning process. You will also learn about ways to develop strategies that can build your region's competitiveness.

The workshop will be facilitated by Erik Pages, founder and President of EntreWorks Consulting, economic development consulting and policy development firm focused on helping communities and organizations achieve their entrepreneurial potential. Previously, Dr. Pages served as Policy Director for the National Commission on Entrepreneurship (NCOE). Pages also worked at the EDA national office for a number of years.

The registration fee for the workshop is \$35 per person. The fee will cover morning coffee, lunch and afternoon refreshments.

Visit <https://connect.computility.com/form/index.php?id=e8c40edb9503beaddf3c034a143918d1> to register online.

Contact the hotel directly at 515.243.1161 to reserve your hotel room. The rate is \$89/ single and \$106/double. The deadline to reserve your room is April 7, 2010.

For more information, contact Nichole Warren at 515.554.3210 or iarcdirector@live.com, or Laurie Thompson at 202.624.5948 or lthompson@nado.org.