

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY[261]**

**Adopted and Filed**

**Rulemaking related to community attraction and tourism program**

The Economic Development Authority hereby rescinds Chapter 211, “Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) Programs,” and adopts a new Chapter 211, “Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) Program,” Iowa Administrative Code.

*Legal Authority for Rulemaking*

This rulemaking is adopted under the authority provided in Iowa Code chapter 15F.

*State or Federal Law Implemented*

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, Iowa Code chapter 15F, subchapter II.

*Purpose and Summary*

Pursuant to Executive Order 10, the Authority is rescinding Chapter 211 and adopting a new chapter in lieu thereof. The chapter describes the policies and procedures applicable to the Community Attraction and Tourism Program provided by the Authority pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 15F, subchapter II. The program provides grants to assist projects that provide recreational, cultural, entertainment, and educational attractions.

The updated chapter is more concise throughout. Unnecessary definitions, language that duplicates statute, and language that is duplicated within the chapter have been eliminated. Changes to the program in 2024 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2385, and 2025 Iowa Acts, House File 975, have been incorporated.

*Public Comment and Changes to Rulemaking*

Notice of Intended Action for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on December 24, 2025, as **ARC 9834C**. A public hearing was held on the following date(s):

- January 13, 2026
- January 15, 2026

No one attended the public hearings. No public comments were received. A change from the Notice has been made to remove references to 2025 Iowa Acts, House File 975, since that legislation has been codified in the 2026 Iowa Code.

*Adoption of Rulemaking*

This rulemaking was adopted by the Authority Board on February 20, 2026.

*Fiscal Impact*

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the State of Iowa.

*Jobs Impact*

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

*Waivers*

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the Authority for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to 261—Chapter 199.

*Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee*

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its [regular monthly meeting](#) or at a special meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

*Effective Date*

This rulemaking will become effective on April 22, 2026.

The following rulemaking action is adopted:

ITEM 1. Rescind 261—Chapter 211 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 211  
COMMUNITY ATTRACTION AND TOURISM (CAT) PROGRAM

**261—211.1(15F) Definitions.** When used in this chapter unless the context otherwise requires:

*“Attraction”* means a permanently located recreational, cultural, educational, or entertainment activity that is available to the general public.

*“Authority”* means the economic development authority created in Iowa Code section 15.105.

*“Board”* means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 15.102.

*“CAT”* means community attraction and tourism.

*“CAT review committee”* means the committee established by Iowa Code section 15F.203(2).

*“Economic development organization”* means an entity organized to position a community to take advantage of economic development opportunities and strengthen a community's competitiveness as a place to work and live.

*“Local support”* means endorsement by local individuals, organizations, and political subdivisions that have a substantial interest in a project.

*“Nonfinancial support”* may include but is not limited to the value of labor and services. Real property and personal property donated for purposes of the project are considered financial support at their fair market value.

*“Public organization”* means a not-for-profit economic development organization or other not-for-profit organization, including one that sponsors or supports community or tourism attractions and activities.

*“Recipient”* means the entity under contract to receive CAT funds and undertake the funded activity.

*“School district”* means a school corporation organized under Iowa Code chapter 274.

*“Vertical infrastructure”* means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 15F.203(3).

**261—211.2(15F) Eligible applicants.** Eligible applicants for CAT funds include cities, counties, public organizations, and school districts in cooperation with a city or county. Any eligible applicant may apply individually or jointly with another eligible applicant or other eligible applicants. A school district must apply jointly with a city or county.

**261—211.3(15F) Eligible projects.**

**211.3(1)** Eligible projects provide recreational, cultural, entertainment, and educational opportunities. Funded projects must position a community to take advantage of economic development opportunities in tourism and strengthen a community's competitiveness as a place to work and live. Completed projects must be open to the public for general use.

**211.3(2)** Eligible CAT projects must be primarily vertical infrastructure projects.

**261—211.4(15F) Ineligible projects.**

**211.4(1)** The board shall not approve an application for assistance under this program to refinance an existing loan.

**211.4(2)** A recipient may not receive more than one CAT award for a single project. However, previously funded projects may receive an additional award(s) if the applicant demonstrates that the funding is to be used for a significant expansion of the project or a new project.

**211.4(3)** The board shall not approve an application for assistance in which the combination of CAT funds plus other state funds would constitute more than 50 percent of the total project costs.

**211.4(4)** Work completed and costs incurred, except the acquisition of real estate, prior to the date of a potential CAT award are ineligible for funding under the CAT programs.

**261—211.5(15F) Application requirements.** Applications for the program must contain all the information identified in Iowa Code section 15F.202(2).

**261—211.6(15F) Application procedure.** Authority staff will review applications for completeness and eligibility and as described in subrule 211.7(1). A review, analysis, and evaluation from the authority staff will be submitted to the CAT review committee, which will then make a final recommendation to the board for final approval, denial, or deferral.

**211.6(1)** Applicants must submit a notice of intent to apply on a form provided by the authority. The authority will send standard application forms to those applicants who have submitted a notice of intent to apply. The notice of intent to apply form will be available on the authority's website. The authority can waive this requirement for good cause.

**211.6(2)** Authority staff may provide technical assistance as necessary. Authority staff and board members may conduct on-site evaluations of proposed projects.

**211.6(3)** Incomplete or ineligible applications will not be forwarded to the CAT review committee or board for review.

**261—211.7(15F) Application review.**

**211.7(1)** Authority staff will review each application for the following information:

- a. Whether the application documents local support for the proposed activity.
- b. Whether the proposed project is primarily a vertical infrastructure project.
- c. Whether at least 65 percent of the funds needed to complete the proposed project have been raised or pledged. Other state funds cannot be counted as match until the applicant can document that at least 50 percent of the funds have been raised. Moneys raised at any time and not yet spent may be considered as local match. Up to 25 percent of the local match may be nonfinancial support.

**211.7(2)** The CAT review committee shall consider, at a minimum, the criteria identified in Iowa Code section 15F.203(3).

**261—211.8(15F) Administration.**

**211.8(1)** *Administration of awards.*

a. A contract shall be executed between the recipient and authority. The authority and the board reserve the right to negotiate terms and conditions of the contract.

b. The recipient must execute and return the contract within 45 days of transmittal of the final contract. Failure to do so may be cause for the board to terminate the award.

c. Certain projects may require that permits or clearances be obtained from other state or local agencies before the project may proceed. Awards may be conditioned upon the timely completion of these requirements.

d. Awards may be conditioned upon commitment of other sources of funds necessary to complete the project.

e. Awards may be conditioned upon the authority's receipt and board approval of an implementation plan for the funded project.

**211.8(2)** *Disbursement of funds.* Recipients shall submit requests for funds in the manner and on forms prescribed by the authority. Individual requests for funds shall be made in an amount equal to or greater than \$1,000 per request, except for the final draw of funds.

**211.8(3)** *Recordkeeping and retention.* The recipient shall retain all financial records, all supporting documents, and all other records pertinent to the funded CAT project for three years after contract closeout. Representatives of the authority or its designees shall have access to all records belonging to or in use by recipients pertaining to CAT funds.

**211.8(4)** *Performance reports and reviews.* Upon request of the authority or the board, recipients shall submit performance reports in the manner and on forms prescribed by the authority. Reports shall assess the use of funds and progress of activities. The authority may perform any reviews or site visits necessary to ensure each recipient's performance.

**211.8(5)** *Amendments to contracts.* Any substantive change to a contract shall be considered an amendment. Substantive changes include time extensions, budget revisions and significant alterations of the funded project that change the scope, location, objectives or scale of the approved project. Amendments must be requested in writing by the recipient and are not considered valid until approved by the board and confirmed in writing.

**211.8(6)** *Contract closeout.* Upon project completion, the authority shall initiate contract closeout procedures.

**211.8(7)** *Compliance with state and local laws and regulations.* Recipients shall comply with all applicable federal, state or local laws, rules or regulations, including but not limited to these rules, any provisions of the Iowa Code governing the program, or the recipient's project or operations.

**211.8(8)** *Remedies for noncompliance.* At any time before contract closeout, the authority may, for cause, find that a recipient is not in compliance with the requirements of this program. Remedies for noncompliance may include penalties up to and including the return of program funds. Reasons for a finding of noncompliance include but are not limited to the recipient's use of funds for activities not described in the contract, the recipient's failure to complete funded projects in a timely manner, the recipient's failure to comply with applicable federal, state or local laws, rules or regulations, or the lack of a continuing capacity of the recipient to carry out the approved project in a timely manner.

**261—211.9(15F) Allocation of funds.** Funds shall be allocated in accordance with Iowa Code section 15F.204(5) through 15F.204(8).

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 15F, subchapter II.

[Filed 2/26/26, effective 4/22/26]

[Published 3/18/26]

EDITOR'S NOTE: For replacement pages for IAC, see IAC Supplement 3/18/26.