

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY[261]**

**Notice of Intended Action**

**Proposing rule making related to funds for the empower rural Iowa program and providing an opportunity for public comment**

The Economic Development Authority (IEDA) hereby proposes to adopt a new Chapter 222, “Empower Rural Iowa Program,” Iowa Administrative Code.

*Legal Authority for Rule Making*

This rule making is proposed under the authority provided in 2021 Iowa Acts, House File 871.

*State or Federal Law Implemented*

This rule making implements, in whole or in part, 2021 Iowa Acts, House File 871, section 3.

*Purpose and Summary*

The Empower Rural Iowa Initiative was created by Executive Order Number 3 dated July 18, 2018, which directs the IEDA to provide staffing and administrative assistance for the initiative and its associated task forces. Pursuant to 2021 Iowa Acts, House File 871, \$700,000 is appropriated to the IEDA for the Empower Rural Iowa Program and the IEDA is directed to adopt rules to establish criteria for the distribution of the appropriated funds.

The proposed new Chapter 222 outlines uses of the funds appropriated by 2021 Iowa Acts, House File 871, including the Rural Housing Needs Assessment Grant Program administered pursuant to Chapter 220 and the Rural Innovation Grant Program administered pursuant to Chapter 221. The new chapter would also allow funds to be used for other priorities identified and published by the task forces associated with the Empower Rural Iowa Initiative.

*Fiscal Impact*

This rule making has no fiscal impact to the State of Iowa beyond that of the legislation it is intended to implement.

*Jobs Impact*

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

*Waivers*

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

*Public Comment*

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this proposed rule making. Written or oral comments in response to this rule making must be received by the IEDA no later than 4:30 p.m. on August 17, 2021. Comments should be directed to:

Lisa Connell  
Iowa Economic Development Authority  
1963 Bell Avenue, Suite 200  
Des Moines, Iowa 50315  
Phone: 515.348.6163  
Email: [lisa.connell@iowaeda.com](mailto:lisa.connell@iowaeda.com)

*Public Hearing*

No public hearing is scheduled at this time. As provided in Iowa Code section 17A.4(1)“b,” an oral presentation regarding this rule making may be demanded by 25 interested persons, a governmental subdivision, the Administrative Rules Review Committee, an agency, or an association having 25 or more members.

*Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee*

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rule making by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rule making 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).

The following rule-making action is proposed:

Adopt the following **new** 261—Chapter 222:

CHAPTER 222  
EMPOWER RURAL IOWA PROGRAM

**261—222.1(89GA, HF871) Purpose.** The empower rural Iowa initiative was created by Executive Order Number 3 dated July 18, 2018, which directs the authority to provide staffing and administrative assistance for the initiative and its associated task forces. Pursuant to 2021 Iowa Acts, House File 871, the authority is directed to adopt rules to establish criteria for the distribution of funds appropriated in section 3, subsection 11, of the legislation to the empower rural Iowa program.

**261—222.2(89GA, HF871) Definitions.** As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

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

“*Director*” means the director of the authority.

“*Empower rural Iowa initiative*” or “*initiative*” means the initiative created by Executive Order Number 3 dated July 18, 2018.

“*Rural community*” means either an Iowa city with a population of 20,000 or less and that is not contiguous to a city with a population of 40,000 or greater, or an Iowa county that is one of the 88 least populous counties in the state.

**261—222.3(89GA, HF871) Eligible uses of funds.**

**222.3(1)** Funds appropriated to the authority for the empower rural Iowa program shall be used to address the challenges and opportunities of rural communities. Uses of funds shall be approved by the director.

**222.3(2)** Eligible uses of funds include the following:

- a. The rural housing needs assessment grant program administered pursuant to 261—Chapter 220;
- b. The rural innovation grant program administered pursuant to 261—Chapter 221;
- c. Support for entrepreneurship and cooperative business models for businesses in rural communities;
- d. Leadership development training for representatives of rural communities;

- e.* Education and training opportunities relating to succession planning for businesses in rural communities;
- f.* Promotion of e-commerce opportunities for businesses in rural communities; and
- g.* Implementation of additional recommendations published by the investing in rural Iowa task force, the growing rural Iowa task force, and the connecting rural Iowa task force created by the empower rural Iowa initiative and administered by the authority.

These rules are intended to implement 2021 Iowa Acts, House File 871.