

CHAPTER 15F

COMMUNITY ATTRACTION AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Legislative intent relating to continuation of prior statutes, nonreversion of funds, and continuation of prior awards; 2000 Acts, ch 1174, §31

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SUBCHAPTER I

VISION IOWA BOARD

15F.101 Definitions.

As used in [this chapter](#), unless the context otherwise requires:

1. “Board” means the vision Iowa board as created in [section 15F.102](#).
 2. “Department” means the Iowa department of economic development created in [section 15.105](#).
- 2000 Acts, ch 1174, §1

15F.102 Vision Iowa board.

1. The vision Iowa board is established consisting of thirteen members and is located for administrative purposes within the department. The director of the department shall provide office space, staff assistance, and necessary supplies and equipment for the board. The director shall budget funds to pay the compensation and expenses of the board. In performing its functions the board is performing a public function on behalf of the state and is a public instrumentality of the state.

2. The membership of the board shall be appointed as follows:

- a. Three members of the general public, one member from each of the three tourism regions.
- b. One mayor of a city with a population of less than twenty thousand.
- c. One county supervisor from a county that has a population ranking in the bottom thirty-three counties according to the 1990 census.
- d. Four members of the general public.
- e. One mayor of a city with a population of twenty thousand or more.
- f. The director of the department of economic development or the director’s designee.
- g. The treasurer of state or the treasurer of state’s designee.
- h. The auditor of state or the auditor of state’s designee.

3. All appointments, except the director of the department of economic development, the treasurer of state, and the auditor of state, shall be made by the governor, shall comply with [sections 69.16](#) and [69.16A](#), and shall be subject to confirmation by the senate. All appointed

members of the board shall have demonstrable experience or expertise in the field of tourism development and promotion, public financing, architecture, engineering, or major facility development or construction.

4. All members of the board, except the director of the department of economic development, the treasurer of state, and the auditor of state, shall be residents of different counties.

5. The chairperson and vice chairperson of the board shall be designated by the governor from the board members listed in [subsection 2](#), paragraphs “a” through “e”. In case of the absence or disability of the chairperson and vice chairperson, the members of the board shall elect a temporary chairperson by a majority vote of those members who are present and voting.

6. The members, except the director of the department of economic development, the treasurer of state, and the auditor of state, shall be appointed to three-year staggered terms and the terms shall commence and end as provided by [section 69.19](#). If a vacancy occurs, a successor shall be appointed to serve the unexpired term. A successor shall be appointed in the same manner and subject to the same qualifications as the original appointment to serve the unexpired term.

7. A majority of the board constitutes a quorum.

2000 Acts, ch 1174, §2; 2008 Acts, ch 1122, §1

Referred to in [§12.71](#), [15F.101](#), [15F.203](#), [15F.304](#)

Confirmation, see §2.32

15F.103 Board duties.

The board shall do all of the following:

1. Organize.
2. Establish the vision Iowa program and the community attraction and tourism program.
3. Oversee and provide approval of the administration of the vision Iowa program and the community attraction and tourism program by the department.
4. Request the treasurer of state to issue bonds on behalf of the board for purposes of the vision Iowa program.

2000 Acts, ch 1174, §3

15F.104 Department duties.

The department, subject to approval by the board, shall adopt administrative rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) necessary to administer the community attraction and tourism program and the vision Iowa program. The department shall provide the board with assistance in implementing administrative functions, marketing the programs, providing technical assistance and application assistance to applicants under the programs, negotiating contracts, and providing project follow-up. The department, in cooperation with the treasurer of state, may conduct negotiations on behalf of the board with applicants regarding terms and conditions applicable to awards under the programs.

2000 Acts, ch 1174, §4

15F.105 Compensation and expenses.

The members of the board are entitled to receive reimbursement for actual expenses incurred while engaged in the performance of official duties. A member of the board may also be eligible to receive compensation as provided in [section 7E.6](#).

2000 Acts, ch 1174, §5

15F.106 Benefits.

Any applicant awarded financial assistance by the board under both the vision Iowa program established in [section 15F.302](#) and the community attraction and tourism program established in [section 15F.202](#) shall provide and pay at least fifty percent of the cost of a standard medical insurance plan for all full-time employees working at the project after the completion of the project for which financial assistance was received.

2000 Acts, ch 1174, §6

SUBCHAPTER II

COMMUNITY ATTRACTION AND TOURISM PROGRAM AND FUNDS

15F.201 Definitions.

As used in [this subchapter](#), unless the context otherwise requires:

1. “Fund” means the community attraction and tourism fund created in [section 15F.204](#).
2. “Program” means the community attraction and tourism program established in [section 15F.202](#).
3. “River enhancement community attraction and tourism project” means a project that creates or enhances recreational opportunities and community attractions on and near lakes or rivers or river corridors within cities across the state under the purview of the program.

2000 Acts, ch 1174, §7; 2009 Acts, ch 184, §33

15F.202 Community attraction and tourism program.

1. The board shall establish and the department, subject to direction and approval by the board, shall administer a community attraction and tourism program to assist communities in the development, creation, and regional marketing of multiple-purpose attraction or tourism facilities. Any moneys appropriated to the river enhancement community attraction and tourism fund created pursuant to [section 15F.205](#) shall be used exclusively for the creation and enhancement of community attractions and tourism opportunities along lakes, rivers, and river corridors in cities across the state, but a recipient of moneys from the river enhancement community attraction and tourism fund shall not be precluded from receiving funds from the community attraction and tourism fund created pursuant to [section 15F.204](#).

2. A city or county in the state or public organization may submit an application to the board for financial assistance for a project under the program. The assistance shall be provided only from funds, rights, and assets legally available to the board and shall be in the form of grants, loans, forgivable loans, and credit enhancement and financing instruments. The application shall include, but not be limited to, the following information:

- a. The total capital investment of the project, including but not limited to costs for construction, site acquisition, and infrastructure improvement.
- b. The amount or percentage of local and private matching moneys which will be or have been provided for the project.
- c. The total number of jobs to be created or retained by the project.
- d. The need of the community for the project and for the financial assistance.
- e. The long-term tax-generating impact of the project.

3. A school district, in cooperation with a city or county, may submit a joint application for financial assistance for a project under the program. The assistance shall be provided only from funds, rights, and assets legally available to the board and shall be in the form of grants, loans, forgivable loans, and credit enhancement and financing instruments. In addition to the information required in [subsection 2](#), the application shall include a demonstration that the intended future use of the project shall be by both joint applicants.

2000 Acts, ch 1174, §8; 2001 Acts, ch 185, §37, 38, 49; 2003 Acts, ch 160, §1; 2008 Acts, ch 1178, §5

Referred to in [§15F.106](#), [15F.201](#), [15F.204](#), [15F.205](#)

15F.203 Community attraction and tourism program application review.

1. Applications for assistance under the program shall be submitted to the department. For those applications that meet the eligibility criteria, the department shall provide a staff review analysis and evaluation to the community attraction and tourism program review committee referred to in [subsection 2](#) and the board.

2. A review committee composed of five members of the board shall review community attraction and tourism program applications submitted to the board and make recommendations regarding the applications to the board. The review committee shall

consist of members of the board listed in [section 15F.102, subsection 2](#), paragraphs “a” through “c”.

3. When reviewing the applications, the review committee and the department shall consider, at a minimum, all of the following:

a. Whether the wages, benefits, including health benefits, safety, and other attributes of the project would improve the quality of life or the quality of attraction or tourism employment in the community.

b. The extent to which such a project would generate additional recreational and cultural attractions or tourism opportunities.

c. The ability of the project to produce a long-term, tax-generating economic impact.

d. The location of the projects and geographic diversity of the applications.

e. The project is primarily a vertical infrastructure project with demonstrated substantial regional or statewide economic impact. For purposes of the program, “vertical infrastructure” means land acquisition and construction, major renovation and major repair of buildings, all appurtenant structures, utilities, site development, and recreational trails and water trails. “Vertical infrastructure” does not include routine, recurring maintenance or operational expenses or leasing of a building, appurtenant structure, or utility without a lease-purchase agreement.

f. Whether the applicant has received financial assistance under the program for the same project.

g. The extent to which the project has taken the following planning principles into consideration:

(1) Efficient and effective use of land resources and existing infrastructure by encouraging development in areas with existing infrastructure or capacity to avoid costly duplication of services and costly use of land.

(2) Provision for a variety of transportation choices, including pedestrian traffic.

(3) Maintenance of a unique sense of place by respecting local cultural and natural environmental features.

(4) Conservation of open space and farmland and preservation of critical environmental areas.

(5) Promotion of the safety, livability, and revitalization of existing urban and rural communities.

4. Upon review of the recommendations of the review committee, the board shall approve, defer, or deny the applications.

5. Upon approval of an application for financial assistance under the program, the board shall notify the treasurer of state regarding the amount of moneys needed to satisfy the award of financial assistance and the terms of the award. The treasurer of state shall notify the department any time moneys are disbursed to a recipient of financial assistance under the program.

2000 Acts, ch 1174, §9; 2007 Acts, ch 215, §58

15F.204 Community attraction and tourism fund.

1. A community attraction and tourism fund is created as a separate fund in the state treasury under the control of the board, consisting of any moneys appropriated by the general assembly and any other moneys available to and obtained or accepted by the board for placement in the fund.

2. Payments of interest, repayments of moneys loaned pursuant to [this subchapter](#), and recaptures of grants or loans shall be deposited in the fund.

3. The fund shall be used to provide assistance only from funds, rights, and assets legally available to the board in the form of grants, loans, forgivable loans, and credit enhancements and financing instruments under the community attraction and tourism program established in [section 15F.202](#). A project with a total cost exceeding twenty million dollars may receive financial assistance under the program. An applicant under the community attraction and tourism program shall not receive financial assistance from the fund in an amount exceeding fifty percent of the total cost of the project.

4. Moneys in the fund are not subject to [section 8.33](#). Notwithstanding [section 12C.7, subsection 2](#), interest or earnings on moneys in the fund shall be credited to the fund.

5. At the beginning of each fiscal year, the board shall allocate one hundred thousand dollars for purposes of marketing those projects that are receiving moneys from the fund. After the marketing allocation, the board shall allocate all remaining moneys in the fund in the following manner:

a. One-third of the moneys shall be allocated to provide assistance to cities and counties which meet the following criteria:

(1) A city which has a population of ten thousand or less according to the most recently published census.

(2) A county which has a population that ranks in the bottom thirty-three counties according to the most recently published census.

b. Two-thirds of the moneys shall be allocated to provide assistance to any city and county in the state, which may include a city or county included under paragraph "a".

6. If two or more cities or counties submit a joint project application for financial assistance under the program, all joint applicants must meet the criteria of [subsection 5, paragraph "a"](#), in order to receive any moneys allocated under that paragraph.

7. If any portion of the allocated moneys under [subsection 5, paragraph "a"](#), has not been awarded by April 1 of the fiscal year for which the allocation is made, the portion which has not been awarded may be utilized by the board to provide financial assistance under the program to any city or county in the state.

8. a. There is appropriated from the rebuild Iowa infrastructure fund to the community attraction and tourism fund, the following amounts:

(1) For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2004, and ending June 30, 2005, the sum of twelve million dollars.

(2) For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2005, and ending June 30, 2006, the sum of five million dollars.

(3) For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2006, and ending June 30, 2007, the sum of five million dollars.

(4) For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2007, and ending June 30, 2008, the sum of five million dollars.

(5) For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2008, and ending June 30, 2009, the sum of twelve million dollars. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, of the amount appropriated in this subparagraph, one million nine hundred thousand dollars is transferred to the housing assistance fund to be used for the jumpstart housing assistance program established pursuant to [section 16.201](#).

(6) For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2010, and ending June 30, 2011, the sum of five million dollars.

(7) For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2011, and ending June 30, 2012, the sum of five million dollars.

(8) For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2012, and ending June 30, 2013, the sum of five million dollars.

b. There is appropriated from the franchise tax revenues deposited in the general fund of the state to the community attraction and tourism fund, the following amounts:

(1) For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2005, and ending June 30, 2006, the sum of seven million dollars.

(2) For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2006, and ending June 30, 2007, the sum of seven million dollars.

(3) For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2007, and ending June 30, 2008, the sum of seven million dollars.

(4) For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2010, and ending June 30, 2011, the sum of seven million dollars.

(5) For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2011, and ending June 30, 2012, the sum of seven million dollars.

(6) For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2012, and ending June 30, 2013, the sum of seven million dollars.

9. Notwithstanding the allocation requirements in [subsection 5](#), the board may make a multiyear commitment to an applicant of up to four million dollars in any one fiscal year.

2000 Acts, ch 1174, §10; 2001 Acts, ch 185, §39, 49; 2004 Acts, ch 1175, §401, 402; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §127; 2008 Acts, ch 1178, §6; 2008 Acts, ch 1179, §50, 51; 2008 Acts, ch 1191, §31; 2009 Acts, ch 170, §2, 11; 2009 Acts, ch 173, §27, 36

Referred to in [§15F.201](#), [§15F.202](#)

2009 amendment to subsection 8, paragraph a, subparagraph (5) takes effect March 16, 2009, and applies retroactively to July 1, 2008, for the fiscal year beginning on that date; 2009 Acts, ch 170, §11

15F.205 River enhancement community attraction and tourism fund.

1. For purposes of [this section](#), “lake” means a lake of which the state or a political subdivision owns the lake bed up to the ordinary high water line and which is open to the use of the general public.

2. A river enhancement community attraction and tourism fund is created as a separate fund in the state treasury under the control of the board, consisting of any moneys appropriated by the general assembly and any other moneys available to and obtained or accepted by the board for placement in the fund.

3. Payments of interest, repayments of moneys loaned pursuant to [this subchapter](#), and recaptures of grants or loans shall be deposited in the fund.

4. The fund shall be used to provide assistance only from funds, rights, and assets legally available to the board, and the assistance shall be in the form of grants, loans, forgivable loans, and credit enhancements and financing instruments as described in the community attraction and tourism program established in [section 15F.202](#).

5. An applicant for financial assistance from moneys in the river enhancement community attraction and tourism fund for a river or lake enhancement project under the community attraction and tourism program shall receive financial assistance from the fund in an amount not to exceed one third of the total cost of the project.

6. Moneys in the fund are not subject to [section 8.33](#). Notwithstanding [section 12C.7, subsection 2](#), interest or earnings on moneys in the fund shall be credited to the fund.

7. At the beginning of each fiscal year, the board shall allocate moneys in the fund for financial assistance to projects that promote and enhance recreational opportunities and community attractions on and near rivers or lakes within cities across the state. Such recreational opportunities and community attractions shall be closely connected to a river or lake and may include but is not limited to pedestrian trails and walkways, amphitheaters, bike trails, water trails or whitewater courses for watercraft, and any modifications necessary for the safe mitigation of dams.

8. The board may make a multiyear commitment to an applicant or may award assistance for multiple projects to the same applicant provided the fund contains sufficient moneys. Any moneys remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year may be carried over to a subsequent fiscal year, or may be obligated in advance for a subsequent fiscal year.

9. The board is not required to award financial assistance pursuant to [this section](#) unless moneys are appropriated to and available from the fund.

2008 Acts, ch 1178, §7

Referred to in [§15F.202](#)

Appropriation of funds for FY 2010-2011 through FY 2012-2013; nonreversion of funds until close of fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015; 2008 Acts, ch 1179, §7; 2009 Acts, ch 173, §21, 36

15F.206 River enhancement community attraction and tourism projects — application review.

1. Applications for assistance for river enhancement community attraction and tourism projects shall be submitted to the department. For those applications that meet the eligibility criteria, the department shall provide a staff review analysis and evaluation to the vision Iowa program review committee referred to in [section 15F.304, subsection 2](#), and the board.

2. When reviewing the applications, the vision Iowa program review committee and the department shall consider, at a minimum, all of the following:

a. Whether the wages, benefits, including health benefits, safety, and other attributes of the project would improve the quality of life or the quality of attraction or tourism employment in the community.

b. The extent to which such a project would generate additional recreational and cultural attractions or tourism opportunities.

c. The ability of the project to produce a long-term, tax-generating economic impact.

d. The location of the projects and geographic diversity of the applications.

e. The project is primarily a vertical infrastructure project with demonstrated substantial regional or statewide economic impact. For purposes of the program, “vertical infrastructure” means land acquisition and construction, major renovation and major repair of buildings, all appurtenant structures, utilities, site development, and recreational trails and water trails. “Vertical infrastructure” does not include routine, recurring maintenance, or operational expenses or leasing of a building, appurtenant structure, or utility without a lease-purchase agreement.

f. Whether the applicant has received financial assistance under the program for the same project.

g. The extent to which the project has taken the following planning principles into consideration:

(1) Efficient and effective use of land resources and existing infrastructure by encouraging development in areas with existing infrastructure or capacity to avoid costly duplication of services and costly use of land.

(2) Provision for a variety of transportation choices, including pedestrian traffic.

(3) Maintenance of a unique sense of place by respecting local cultural and natural environmental features.

(4) Conservation of open space and farmland and preservation of critical environmental areas.

(5) Promotion of the safety, livability, and revitalization of existing urban and rural communities.

3. Upon review of the recommendations of the review committee, the board shall approve, defer, or deny the applications.

4. Upon approval of an application for financial assistance under the program, the board shall notify the treasurer of state regarding the amount of moneys needed to satisfy the award of financial assistance and the terms of the award. The treasurer of state shall notify the department anytime moneys are disbursed to a recipient of financial assistance under the program.

2009 Acts, ch 184, §34

Referred to in [§15F304](#)

SUBCHAPTER III VISION IOWA PROGRAM

15F301 Definitions.

As used in [this subchapter](#), unless the context otherwise requires:

1. “Fund” means the vision Iowa fund created in [section 12.72](#).

2. “Program” means the vision Iowa program established in [section 15F302](#).

2000 Acts, ch 1174, §11

15F302 Vision Iowa program.

1. The board shall establish and the department, subject to direction and approval by the board, shall administer a vision Iowa program to assist communities in the development of major tourism facilities.

2. A city or county or a public organization in the state may submit an application to the board for financial assistance for a project under the program. For purposes of [this subsection](#), “public organization” means a nonprofit economic development organization or other nonprofit organization that sponsors or supports community or tourism attractions and activities. The financial assistance from the fund shall be provided only from funds, rights, and assets legally available to the board and shall be in the form of grants, loans, forgivable

loans, pledges, and credit enhancements and financing instruments. The application shall include, but not be limited to, the following information:

- a. The total capital investment of the project, including but not limited to costs for construction, site acquisition, and infrastructure improvement.
- b. A description of the proposed financing including the amount or percentage of local and private matching moneys to be provided for the project.
- c. The total number of jobs to be created or retained by the project.
- d. The need of the community for the project and for financial assistance.
- e. The long-term, tax-generating impact of the project.
- f. A discussion of how the project meets other criteria established in [this subchapter](#).
- g. The projected long-term economic viability of the project, including projected revenues and expenses.

3. A school district, in cooperation with a city or county, may submit a joint application for financial assistance for a project under the program. The financial assistance shall be provided only from funds, rights, and assets legally available to the board and shall be in the form of grants, loans, forgivable loans, and credit enhancements and financing instruments. In addition to the information required in [subsection 2](#), the application shall include a demonstration that the intended future use of the project shall be by both joint applicants.

2000 Acts, ch 1174, §12; 2001 Acts, ch 185, §40, 41, 49

Referred to in [§12.72](#), [§12.73](#), [§12.75](#), [§15F.106](#), [§15F.301](#), [§15F.304](#), [§292.2](#)

15F.303 Eligibility.

1. The total cost for a project must be at least twenty million dollars in order for an applicant to receive financial assistance under the program. An applicant or the board may divide a proposed project into component parts. The board may choose to provide financial assistance under the program to one or more component parts instead of providing financial assistance under the program for the entire project.

2. An applicant must demonstrate financial and nonfinancial support for the project which may be from a public or private source. Nonfinancial support may include, but is not limited to, the value of labor and services, real and personal property donated for purposes of the project, and the use of real and personal property for purposes of the project. The financial and nonfinancial support for the project described under [this subsection](#) shall equal at least fifty percent of the total cost of the project.

3. In order for a project to be eligible to receive financial assistance, the project must satisfy all of the following criteria:

a. The project is primarily a vertical infrastructure project with demonstrated substantial regional or statewide economic impact. For purposes of the program, “vertical infrastructure” means land acquisition and construction, major renovation and major repair of buildings, all appurtenant structures, utilities, site development, and recreational trails. “Vertical infrastructure” does not include routine, recurring maintenance or operational expenses or leasing of a building, appurtenant structure, or utility without a lease-purchase agreement.

b. The project supports or is strategically aligned with other existing regional or statewide cultural, recreational, entertainment, or educational activities or with communities adjacent to cultural and entertainment districts whose existing or planned amenity base will augment or complement the cultural and entertainment venues of such districts.

c. The project provides benefits to persons living outside the county in which the project is located or to persons living outside the state.

d. The project will increase the diversity of activities available to citizens, workers, families, and tourists, and enhance recruitment and retention of young people as residents.

e. The project has economic or other obstacles impeding local financing of the project.

4. The board shall not approve an application for assistance for any of the following purposes:

a. To refinance a loan existing prior to the initial application date.

b. For a project that has previously received assistance under the program, unless the

applicant demonstrates that the assistance would be used for a significant expansion of a project.

2000 Acts, ch 1174, §13; 2007 Acts, ch 215, §81

15F.304 Vision Iowa program application review.

1. Applications for assistance under the program shall be submitted to the department. For those applications that meet the eligibility criteria, the department shall provide a staff review and evaluation to the vision Iowa program review committee referred to in [subsection 2](#) and the board.

2. A review committee composed of eight members of the board shall review vision Iowa program applications and river enhancement community attraction and tourism project applications submitted to the board and make recommendations regarding the applications to the board. The review committee shall consist of members of the board listed in [section 15F.102, subsection 2](#), paragraphs “d” through “h”.

3. When reviewing the applications, the review committee and the department shall consider, in addition to other criteria established in [this subchapter](#), all of the following:

a. Whether wages, benefits, including health benefits, safety, and other attributes of the project would improve the quality of other existing regional or statewide cultural, recreational, entertainment, and educational activities or employment in the community.

b. The extent to which the project would generate additional attraction and tourism opportunities.

c. The ability of the project to produce a long-term, tax-generating economic impact in excess of the proposed financial assistance from the vision Iowa fund.

d. The geographic diversity of the project in combination with other proposed projects.

e. The investment of the city, county, or region in the overall project.

f. Other funding mechanisms.

g. The long-term economic viability of the project.

h. The extent to which the project has taken the following planning principles into consideration:

(1) Efficient and effective use of land resources and existing infrastructure by encouraging development in areas with existing infrastructure or capacity to avoid costly duplication of services and costly use of land.

(2) Provision for a variety of transportation choices, including pedestrian traffic.

(3) Maintenance of a unique sense of place by respecting local cultural and natural environmental features.

(4) Conservation of open space and farmland and preservation of critical environmental areas.

(5) Promotion of the safety, livability, and revitalization of existing urban and rural communities.

4. Upon review of the recommendations of the review committee, the board shall approve, defer, or deny the applications. If an application is approved, the board may enter into an agreement with the applicant to provide financial assistance authorized under [section 15F.302](#).

5. The review committee shall consider, review, and make recommendations regarding applications for assistance for river enhancement community attractions and tourism projects as provided in [section 15F.206](#).

2000 Acts, ch 1174, §14; 2000 Acts, ch 1232, §44; 2001 Acts, ch 185, §43, 49; 2009 Acts, ch 184, §35, 36

Referred to in [§15F.206](#)