

231.24 Certified retirement communities.**1. Program purpose.**

a. The department shall establish a certified retirement communities program to recognize communities in the state that have made themselves attractive destinations for retirees.

b. The purposes of the program shall be to encourage retirees to make their home in Iowa, to help communities promote and market themselves as retirement destinations for retirees, to assist the economic development of rural communities by encouraging retirees to live, work, and volunteer there, and to encourage tourism in Iowa by enhancing the marketing of the state to retirees everywhere.

2. Program fund.

a. A certified retirement communities fund is created in the general fund of the state under the control of the department consisting of fees collected from applicants to the certified retirement communities program.

b. Moneys in the fund are appropriated to the department for purposes of administering the certified retirement communities program.

c. Moneys in the fund are not subject to section 8.33. Notwithstanding section 12C.7, interest or earnings on moneys in the fund shall be credited to the fund.

3. Eligibility.

a. A community in the state is eligible to be named a certified retirement community. For purposes of this section, “community” includes but is not limited to a city, county, region, neighborhood, or district. For purposes of this section, a community can, but need not, be coterminous with a political subdivision of the state or with a particular geographic boundary. In an application for recognition as a certified retirement community, the applicant shall clearly articulate how the applicant defines community for purposes of seeking certification.

b. The department is encouraged to collaborate with the Iowa cooperative extension service in agriculture and home economics at Iowa state university of science and technology in the development of an outreach program to assist communities seeking certification.

4. *Applications.* Each community seeking certification shall meet the following requirements:

a. The community shall submit an application to the department containing basic demographic and statistical information including crime statistics, tax-related information, recreational opportunities, housing prices and availability, health care and emergency medical service availability, and other factors deemed relevant by the department.

b. The community shall demonstrate the support and active involvement of the local governing body, churches, clubs, businesses, media outlets, or other entities with an interest in the future of the community.

c. The community shall submit with the application a plan describing the community’s long-term care facility and service capabilities and the community’s strategy for marketing the community to retirees. The plan shall include a target market, a list of competing communities, an analysis of the community’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and dangers, and the steps the community will employ to achieve the goals of the plan.

d. The department may determine and collect a reasonable application fee for the program.

5. Application review.

a. The department shall accept and review applications for certification and determine which communities qualify for certification.

b. In determining which communities qualify, the department shall develop a set of criteria for evaluating and scoring the applicants and comparing each applicant against the other applicants. The criteria developed by the department shall include all of the following:

- (1) The competitiveness of the tax burden on residents in the community.
- (2) Housing availability and cost.
- (3) Climatic factors.
- (4) Personal and community safety.
- (5) Work, volunteer, and community service opportunities.
- (6) Health care and emergency medical services available to residents of the community.

- (7) Public transportation and transportation infrastructure.
 - (8) Educational quality and opportunities.
 - (9) Recreational and leisure opportunities.
 - (10) The availability of cultural and performing arts, sporting events, festivals, and other activities.
 - (11) The availability of services and facilities necessary to assist retirees as they age.
6. *Recognition and assistance.* If the department determines that a community qualifies for certification, the department shall issue to the community a certificate recognizing the status of the community as an attractive destination for retirees.
7. *Expiration and recertification.*
- a. A community's certification expires on the fifth anniversary of the date of initial certification.
 - b. To be recertified, a community must submit a new application as described in subsection 4 and include a report on the success or failure of the community's past efforts to market itself to retirees.
8. *Rules.* The department shall adopt rules for the administration of this section.
9. *Program administration deferral.* The department may defer the implementation of the certified retirement communities program until such time as the department has the resources to administer the program, as determined by the director.
- 2009 Acts, ch 152, §1; 2010 Acts, ch 1192, §50, 73