

CHAPTER 28
RURAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT GRANT PROGRAM

[Prior to 02/22/23, see Economic Development Authority[261] Ch 220]

Chapter rescission date pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.7: 7/2/30

261—28.1(88GA,SF608) Purpose. The purpose of the rural housing needs assessment grant program is to support community efforts to interpret hard data with supplemental information and to help communities implement changes to development codes, local ordinances, and housing incentives according to the community's needs.

[ARC 9299C, IAB 5/28/25, effective 7/2/25]

261—28.2(88GA,SF608) Definitions. For purposes of this chapter unless the context otherwise requires:

“*Applicant*” means an Iowa community applying for financial assistance under the program.

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

“*Community*” means a county, an incorporated city, or a community designee.

“*Community designee*” means a legal entity established or designated by a county or incorporated city in an agreement pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 28E for the purposes of evaluating housing needs.

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

“*Financial assistance*” means a grant made by the authority to an applicant approved for funding under the program.

“*Program*” means the rural housing needs assessment grant program established in this chapter.

[ARC 9299C, IAB 5/28/25, effective 7/2/25]

261—28.3(88GA,SF608) Program description.

28.3(1) Amount, form, and timing of assistance. The amount of assistance awarded will be determined by the authority and will be based on the total amount of funds available to the authority for the program and the costs specified in the application. The authority will establish a maximum grant award per application and a minimum grant award per application for each fiscal year in which funding is available. The authority will provide financial assistance in the form of a grant. Funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis for expenses incurred by the applicant after approval of an award by the director.

28.3(2) Application.

a. Forms. All applications and other filings related to the program shall be on such forms and in accordance with such instructions as may be established by the authority. Information about the program, the application, and application instructions may be obtained by contacting the authority.

b. Application period. Each fiscal year during which funding is available, applications for financial assistance will only be accepted during the established application period, or periods, as identified by the authority on its website.

c. Completeness. An application will not be considered submitted for review until the application is completed and all required supporting documentation and information are provided to the authority.

28.3(3) Use of funds.

a. An applicant shall use funds only for reimbursement of the costs directly related to a project. The authority may require documentation or other information establishing the actual costs incurred for a project.

b. For purposes of this subrule, “costs directly related” does not include any expenses specified as ineligible in the agreement entered pursuant to rule 261—28.5(88GA,SF608).

[ARC 9299C, IAB 5/28/25, effective 7/2/25]

261—28.4(88GA,SF608) Program eligibility, application scoring, and funding decisions.

28.4(1) Program eligibility. An applicant must meet the following eligibility criteria to qualify for financial assistance under this program:

a. The applicant must be an Iowa community as defined in rule 261—28.2(88GA,SF608).

b. An applicant that is an incorporated city must have a population of 20,000 or less and shall not be contiguous to a city with a population of 40,000 or greater. An applicant that is a county shall be one of the 88 least populous counties in the state. An applicant that is a community designee shall have entered an agreement pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 28E with an incorporated city or county meeting the population criteria in this paragraph.

c. An eligible applicant will be allowed to submit only one application per application period.

d. The applicant must demonstrate the capacity for administering a grant.

e. The applicant must demonstrate the feasibility of the project's proposed scope and timeline with the funds requested.

f. The applicant must identify and describe other sources of funding for the proposed assessment and related activities.

g. The applicant must identify any partner organizations that will be utilized in interpreting and implementing the data collected through the assessment.

h. The applicant must provide a cash match of at least 50 cents for every dollar awarded as a grant under this program.

28.4(2) *Application scoring criteria.* All completed applications will be reviewed and scored. Each application will be scored using criteria set forth by the authority, which may include the following:

a. Applicant readiness and partnerships. The application should demonstrate that the applicant is actively addressing housing needs and has identified diverse partners.

b. Project goals and timeline. The application should demonstrate clearly defined, measurable goals and a timeline for execution of the project.

c. Project budget and financing. The application should include a complete budget that provides clear justification for all costs. The application should also demonstrate secured financing and that the cash match requirement has been met.

d. Additional points. Extra consideration is provided to applications that have projects identified in an Iowa great places agreement as well as those located in a community with a population of 10,000 or less.

28.4(3) *Funding decisions.* Funding decisions will be made using the following process:

a. *Staff review.* Each application will be reviewed by staff for eligibility and completeness. Eligible and complete applications will be sent to a grant committee.

b. *Grant committee review and recommendation.* Following staff review, a grant committee will review and score applications using the criteria in subrule 28.4(2) and will make funding recommendations. The committee may utilize an outside technical panel if the committee determines additional expertise is necessary to review and score the application. The application and score will be referred to the director with a recommendation as to whether to fund the project and, if funding is recommended, a recommendation as to the amount of the grant.

c. *Director's decision.* The director will make the final funding decision on each application, taking into consideration the amount of available funding and the grant committee's recommendation. The director may approve, deny, or defer funding for any application.

d. *Notification.* Each applicant will be notified in writing of the funding decision.

[ARC 9299C, IAB 5/28/25, effective 7/2/25]

261—28.5(88GA,SF608) Agreement and reports.

28.5(1) Each applicant that is approved for financial assistance under the program shall enter into an agreement with the authority for the provision of such financial assistance. The agreement will establish the terms on which the financial assistance is to be provided and may include any other terms reasonably necessary for the efficient administration of the program.

28.5(2) The authority and the applicant may amend the agreement at any time upon the mutual agreement of both the authority and the applicant.

28.5(3) A recipient under the program shall submit information reasonably required by the authority to make reports to the authority's board, the governor's office, or the general assembly.

[ARC 9299C, IAB 5/28/25, effective 7/2/25]

These rules are intended to implement 2019 Iowa Acts, Senate File 608, and Executive Order 11 (October 19, 2023).

[Filed ARC 5092C (Notice ARC 4774C, IAB 11/20/19), IAB 7/15/20, effective 8/19/20]

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