

CHAPTER 29  
LOCAL RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS PROGRAM

**571—29.1(8,77GA,ch1219) Purpose.** The purpose of the local recreation infrastructure grants program is to provide state cost sharing to communities, counties, organizations and associations for the restoration or construction of recreational complexes or facilities.

The Iowa department of natural resources, hereinafter referred to as the department, will administer the local recreation infrastructure grants program.

**571—29.2(8,77GA,ch1219) Definitions.**

“*Commission*” means the natural resource commission created in Iowa Code section 455A.5.

“*Department*” means the department of natural resources created in Iowa Code section 455A.2.

“*Director*” means the director of the department of natural resources.

“*Infrastructure*” is defined in Iowa Code section 8.57(5c) as “vertical infrastructure” and includes only land acquisition and construction, major renovation and major repair of buildings, all appurtenant structures, utilities, site developments, and recreational trails.

**571—29.3(8,77GA,ch1219) Eligibility requirements.** Grants shall be awarded to local political subdivisions of the state and to any other established organization or association which is duly authorized and charged with responsibilities for construction, maintenance and operation of public recreation complexes and facilities. Private entities making application must demonstrate that they are acting on behalf of a public entity.

**571—29.4(8,77GA,ch1219) Assistance ceiling and cost share.** Grants to any individual project shall not exceed \$100,000. Local project sponsors must provide local funding at the rate of two local dollars for each state grant dollar. Up to 50 percent of the local share may be a “soft match” in the form of donated labor, materials or land value. An appraisal must be approved by the department to serve as the basis for establishing the value of real property if used to provide soft match. Prevailing wage rates in the vicinity of the project shall serve as the basis for establishing the value of donated labor or services.

**571—29.5(8,77GA,ch1219) Minimum grant amount.** Applications for assistance totaling less than \$2,500 will not be considered.

**571—29.6(8,77GA,ch1219) Grant application submission.**

**29.6(1) Form of application.** Grant applications shall be on forms and shall follow guidelines provided by the department. Completed applications shall provide sufficient detail as to clearly describe the scope of the project.

**29.6(2) Application timing.** Grant applications (one original and six copies) must be received in acceptable form by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034, by the close of business on the first business day of September.

**29.6(3) Local funding.** An applicant shall certify that it has committed its share of project costs before the 90 percent up-front grant payment will be made. A “letter of intent” signed by the mayor, chairperson of the board of supervisors, chairperson of the county conservation board, or the CEO or chief financial officer of an agency or organization and submitted with the application showing intent to include funds in finalized budgets by March 15 will be accepted as proof of commitment. Applicants must forward proof of budgeting by April 1 or be removed from the list of approved projects.

**29.6(4) Similar development projects.** A single application for a development project grant may include development on more than one area if that development is of a like type.

**571—29.7(8,77GA,ch1219) Project review and selection.**

**29.7(1) Review and selection committee.** A review and selection committee, hereinafter referred to as the committee, comprised of six members appointed by the director, two representing cities, two representing counties, one representing other organizations or associations, and one having expertise

in the vertical infrastructure industry shall review and evaluate project applications and shall develop funding recommendations to be forwarded to the natural resource commission for approval.

**29.7(2) Conflict of interest.** If a project is submitted to the review and selection committee by a city, county or other eligible sponsor, one of whose members or employees is on the review and selection committee, that individual shall not participate in discussion and shall not vote on that particular project.

**29.7(3) Consideration withheld.** The committee will not consider any application which, on the date of the selection session, is not complete or for which additional pertinent information has been requested and not received.

**29.7(4) Application rating system.** The committee will apply a numerical rating system to each grant application which is considered for fund assistance. The criteria, with a weight factor for each, shall include the following:

- a. Public demand or need—weight factor of 2.
- b. Quality of site or project—weight factor of 3.
- c. Urgency of proposed project—weight factor of 2.
- d. Multiple benefits provided, including economic benefits—weight factor of 3.
- e. Conformance with local/regional and statewide plans—weight factor of 2.
- f. Geographic distribution—weight factor of 1.
- g. Up to 5 bonus points may be awarded to projects demonstrating public/private partnerships.

Each criterion shall be given a score from 1 to 10, which is then multiplied by the weight factor.

**571—29.8(8,77GA,ch1219) Rating system not used.** If total grant requests are less than the allotment available, the rating system will not be applied. All applications will be reviewed by the review and selection committee for eligibility to ensure they conform with the purpose of the program.

**571—29.9(8,77GA,ch1219) Applications not approved for funding.** Applications which have been considered but not approved for immediate funding or placed on the reserve list shall be returned to the applicants if requested.

**571—29.10(8,77GA,ch1219) Commission review.** The commission will review all committee recommendations as well as recommendations from the director and staff of the department at the first commission meeting following the review session. The commission may make alterations to the recommended priorities of projects and may reject any application recommended for funding or may approve any application not recommended by the committee or the director and staff. Reasons for change or rejection of any recommended project must be included in the motion to change the order or to reject any project. Commission action will result in three categories of projects: (1) approved for immediate funding; (2) approved for funding but placed on a reserve list to be funded from current funding cycle in the event that higher ranking projects fail to be implemented; and (3) disapproved for funding.

**571—29.11(8,77GA,ch1219) Grant amendments.** Project amendments may be made upon request by the applicant, subject to the availability of funds, and approval by the director.

**571—29.12(8,77GA,ch1219) Timely commencement of projects.** Grant recipients are expected to carry out their projects in an expedient manner. The project agreement signed by the sponsor and the director will include anticipated start-up and completion dates. Projects shall be initiated no later than July 1 following their approval by the commission and shall be completed within one year. Extensions must be approved by the director. Failure to initiate projects in a timely manner may be cause for termination of the agreement and cancellation of the grant.

**571—29.13(8,77GA,ch1219) Payments.** Ninety percent of approved grant amounts may be paid to project sponsors when requested, but not earlier than start-up of the project. Ten percent of the grant total shall be withheld by the department, pending successful completion and final site inspection, or until any irregularities discovered as a result of a final site inspection have been resolved.

**571—29.14(8,77GA,ch1219) Record keeping and retention.** Grant recipients shall keep adequate records relating to the administration of a project, particularly relating to all incurred expenses. These records shall be available for audit by representatives of the department and the state auditor's office. All records shall be retained in accordance with state laws.

**571—29.15(8,77GA,ch1219) Eligible projects.** Grants under this program are directed toward "vertical infrastructure" as defined in Iowa Code section 8.57(5c).

**571—29.16(8,77GA,ch1219) Project life and recovery of funds.** Applicants shall state an expected project life which will become part of the project agreement. Should the funded project cease to be used for public recreation before the stated project life, the director may seek to recover the remaining value of the grant award in the project.

**571—29.17(8,77GA,ch1219) Unlawful use of funds.** Whenever any property, real or personal, acquired or developed with grants under this program passes from the control of the grantee or is used for purposes other than the approved project purpose, it will be considered an unlawful use of the funds.

**571—29.18(8,77GA,ch1219) Remedy.** Funds used without authorization, for purposes other than the approved project purpose, or unlawfully must be returned to the department for deposit in the account supporting this program. In the case of diversion of personal property, the grantee shall remit to the department funds in the amount of the original purchase price of the property. The grantee shall have a period of two years after notification by the department in which to correct the unlawful use of funds. The remedy provided in this rule is in addition to others provided by law.

**571—29.19(8,77GA,ch1219) Ineligibility.** Whenever the director determines that a grantee is in violation of these rules, that grantee shall be ineligible for further assistance until the matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of the commission.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 8.57(5c) and 1998 Iowa Acts, chapter 1219, section 10.

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