

571—33.40(455A) Competitive grants to cities. Fifteen percent of available funds in the resource enhancement and protection fund (after the \$350,000 annual allocation to the conservation education board and 1 percent of revenues to the fund are allocated to the administration fund) shall be allocated annually to the city park and open spaces grant account. That 15 percent shall be divided into three portions according to the percent of the state's urban population in each category, with each portion available on a competitive basis to cities falling within one of the following three size categories:

Cities of less than 2,000

Cities between 2,000 and 25,000

Cities larger than 25,000

Funds shall be initially apportioned to each category as per this rule. If at the time of project review and scoring there are funds available in any category which exceed the requests for grants in that category, those funds may, at the director's discretion, be transferred to another category where requests exceed the funds available.

33.40(1) Eligible projects. Grants for up to 100 percent of project costs made to cities may be used for the acquisition, establishment and maintenance of natural parks, preserves and open spaces.

Grants may include expenditures for multipurpose trails, rest room facilities, shelter houses and picnic facilities, museums, parks, preserves, parkways, city forests, city wildlife areas as well as other open space-oriented acquisition and development projects, subject to the restrictions in rule 571—33.4(455A).

33.40(2) Eligible sponsors. Any incorporated city or town in the state may make application for a grant.

33.40(3) Grant ceilings. Incorporated cities and towns are eligible to receive annual grants from the resource enhancement and protection fund in accordance with the following schedule:

Population	Maximum
0 — 1,000	\$ 50,000
1,001 — 5,000	75,000
5,001 — 10,000	100,000
10,001 — 25,000	125,000
25,001 — 50,000	150,000
50,001 — 75,000	200,000
over 75,000	300,000

The grant ceiling may be waived upon approval by the director if (1) the project is regional in nature or is projected to serve a minimum of 100,000 people; or (2) the project cannot be staged over a multiyear period so that a separate grant application might be submitted each year.

33.40(4) Review and selection committee.

a. The director shall appoint a five-member review and selection committee to evaluate project applications. This committee shall include one member representing each of the three size classes of cities (e.g., one from a city of less than 2,000, one from a city of 2,000 to 25,000, and one from a city of over 25,000). The director shall request a list of candidates from the Iowa league of cities and Iowa parks and recreation association. The remaining two members of the committee shall be a representative of the department and an at-large member. Additionally, there shall be at least two alternates designated by the director from the candidates list provided by the Iowa league of cities and the Iowa parks and recreation association. The committee shall elect its own chairperson from its members. Members shall serve three-year staggered terms.

b. Conflict of interest. An individual who is a member, volunteer, or employee of an entity that has submitted a project shall not serve on the scoring committee during that award cycle. Instead, one of the alternates shall review and score in the individual's place.

33.40(5) Project selection criteria. The committee shall evaluate and rank the resource enhancement and protection (REAP) city grant applications, scoring each criterion from 1 to 10, low to high, and using the following multipliers for each criterion:

a. The committee shall use a multiplier of four for the relationship to relevant regional and statewide programs based on the demonstrated relationship to the state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan, the Iowa open spaces protection plan, the county resource enhancement plan, and other relevant local, state and federal plans.

b. The committee shall use a multiplier of three for the quality of the site or the project, or both:

(1) Quality of site for land acquisition projects. The committee shall consider the following characteristics:

1. Level of significance. Relative rarity of the natural resources found on the project site, including but not limited to native vegetation, the documented presence of species of greatest conservation need as defined by the Iowa Wildlife Action Plan developed by the department, which may be amended from time to time, or other uncommonly occurring but native resources.

2. Resource representation. The quality of the project site, including but not limited to the size and diversity of the project area and the vegetation and wildlife it supports.

3. Level of threat. Specific factors or immediate threats to the project area that constitute urgency for acquisition and development, including but not limited to urban expansion, residential development, agricultural activities, or clearing.

4. Relation to public land. Proximity to existing wildlife management areas, existing parks, other public recreation areas or other greenbelt areas already under public ownership and management.

(2) Quality of project. For construction projects, the committee shall consider plans that demonstrate the highest and best site-specific quality of design, including projects that use materials which incorporate energy savings and adhere to sustainable building principles, including waste minimizations and material reuse; plans for improvements that enhance the restoration or expansion of Iowa's natural resources or that use development principles which benefit the natural ecology of the proposed area; plans that include innovations or construction methods in the design and development of the project; and projects whose actual design and construction will exceed commonly accepted design and construction standards.

c. The committee shall use a multiplier of two for each of the following:

(1) Environmental benefits. Projects that demonstrate a benefit to the surrounding environment, including but not limited to incorporation of land improvements that may have a positive impact on the larger ecosystem, such as timber or prairie establishment or wetland or filter strip development.

(2) Public benefit. A realistic estimate of the number of users of the project area and consideration of secondary benefits such as impacts on local tourism, surrounding businesses and adjacent property owners.

(3) Local support. Demonstrated need for the project and increased public use of the project area as a result of the award, as documented through surveys and other testing methods, letters of support, and planning processes that consider social, demographic, ecological and economic considerations.

d. The committee shall use a multiplier of one for a communication plan that identifies the project sponsor's effort to inform and advise constituents and users about the importance of the proposed project and plans to promote the proposed project to expected user groups.

33.40(6) Grant application schedule. Rescinded IAB 12/26/90, effective 1/30/91.
[ARC 6789C, IAB 1/11/23, effective 2/15/23]