

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

City of Decorah sponsored application for the Iowa Economic Development Authority's Community Catalyst Building Remediation Grant Program

I. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The City of Decorah ("City") is issuing this request for proposals ("RFP") to select a private sector partner applicant for the Iowa Economic Development Authority's ("IEDA") Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program ("Program").

The city is seeking a property owner/developer of a building in the downtown Central Commercial Business District to partner with in preparing and submitting a grant application. This RFP is not for a grant award, but to be the city's applicant for the statewide competitive grant program.

This RFP was issued on Monday, October 18, 2021. **Proposals are due Monday, November 22, 2021, by 4:00 P.M. CST.** Proposals must be mailed or delivered to:

Decorah City Hall
City Manager
400 Claiborne Dr.
PO Box 138
Decorah, IA 52101

For questions regarding this RFP or for additional information on the Community Catalyst Program, contact Travis Goedken, City Manager at (563) 382-3651 or citymanager@decorahia.org.

II. ABOUT THE COMMUNITY CATALYST PROGRAM

Under the Program, IEDA will provide grants to cities for the redevelopment, rehabilitation or deconstruction of buildings to stimulate economic growth or reinvestment in the community. The maximum grant award per project is \$100,000. Under Program regulations, the actual grant applicant must be a city. If the application is funded, a sub-grant agreement will be made between the city and the private owner/developer.

Strong applications will show the potential for catalytic economic growth in the community; improve appearances and safety; exhibit appropriate design standards; and be well-funded. Economic growth may include the creation of additional jobs, growth of new or existing businesses, development of new housing units (e.g. upper-story housing), increase property values, and have a significant, positive impact on the community. The scope of a project should meet at least one or more of the following project types:

- **Redevelopment & Remediation:** Development activities associated with the redevelopment, repair, improvement, rehabilitation, reuse or repurposing of at least one but no more than two underutilized buildings at a project site. Or a project undertaken either for the purposes of remediating underutilized buildings, for constructing new buildings or improvements at a site where formerly existing buildings have been demolished.
- **Public Nuisance:** A building that is a menace to the public health, welfare or safety, or that is structurally unsafe, unsanitary or not provided with adequate safe egress, constitutes a fire hazard, or is otherwise dangerous to human life, or a hazard to public health, welfare or safety by reason of inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, obsolescence or abandonment. Public nuisance includes buildings with blighting characteristics as defined by Iowa Code section 403.2.

- Underutilized Building: A building that is vacant or mostly vacant, is blighted or severely deteriorated, and contains potential safety hazards including structural instability, code noncompliance, vermin infestation, vandalism or potential vandalism, vagrancy, hazardous materials or generally unsafe or hazardous conditions. The building may or may not be considered a public nuisance.

It is estimated there will be approximately \$1 million dollars has been allocated statewide for this Program, funding 10 projects. At least 40% of grant awards are reserved for communities with populations of less than 1,500. Grant funds are state monies administered by the Iowa Economic Development Authority. Last year, approximately one-third of city's invited to submit full applications received grant awards.

Funding assistance will be provided in the form of a reimbursable grant. Costs must be incurred and submitted for reimbursement for receive grant funds. Up to 60% of the funds may be reimbursed mid-progress. The remaining 40% of funds will be reimbursed upon completion of the project.

If awarded, IEDA will enter into a contract with the City. The property owner will be required to sign a sub-recipient agreement with the city.

III. PROGRAM DETAILS

The project must be for at least one building, but no more than two. For two buildings to be considered part of the same project, the buildings must be continuous and under common ownership.

Property owners must provide financial match towards the project, but there is no minimum requirement. If a grant application is submitted, the city will negotiate to also provide financial support for the project. City support may be in-kind (e.g. building permit fees waived), incentives (e.g. future tax abatement or rebates, grants) or may be in the form of low interest loans.

Community Catalyst grants funds may be used for cost directly related to the expenditures incurred in acquisition, redevelopment or rehabilitation of a property. Examples of these types of costs include site preparation; surveying; construction materials and labor; architectural and engineering services; building permit and inspection fees; and interest accrued on a construction loan during the time of the project.

Additional information on the Program is available online at: <https://www.iowaeda.com/downtown-resource-center/community-catalyst/>

IV. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals should be submitted to the city in narrative form and include the following information:

- Property address and ownership information;
- Description of proposed project and nature of improvements;
- Existing and proposed use(s) of the building;
- Proposed improvements to exterior and design standards (projects which include historic preservation or restoration of building façades and incorporate “green” building practices are encouraged);
- How the proposed project will improve the utilization of the property;
- Total grant dollars to be applied for, owner financial contribution, and total estimated project cost; and
- Photos of exterior and interior of building.

V. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

The city will evaluate proposals utilizing the scoring criteria stated below in order to select the best proposal for the funding source. A committee consisting of city staff, city officials, and other partners will review and score proposals. The highest scoring proposal will be recommended by the committee to the City Council for selection as the project for the city's application. The city reserves the right to not select any proposals if it is determined none would be competitive. In the event that it appears the highest scoring applicant will not be able to meet the grant timeline or program requirements, the city may select the next highest scoring applicant, and so on, until a viable applicant is selected. The City of Decorah reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, either in whole or in part, with or without cause, to waive any informalities, elect to conduct interviews, and to negotiate terms of a development agreement based on a proposal.

Proposals will be evaluated using the following 50-point criteria:

- Project Impact (0-15 points) – Project exhibits strong impact on the community and downtown; be a catalyst for economic development; improve the appearance of the project site and community.
- Project Appropriateness (0-15 points) – Justification for the remediation; explanation of the proposed treatment of significant building features and exhibit sympathetic treatment of historical structures.
- Project Funding (0-10 points) - Financial feasibility to complete the project; realistic cost estimates of proposed work based on project plans.
- Sustainability/Smart Growth Principals (0-5 points) – Proposed improvements promote sustainability and green building practices.
- Readiness to Proceed (0-5 points) – Demonstration of capability to complete project within the timeframe stated in section VI, below.

VI. PROJECT TIMELINE & APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The deadline to submit proposals for this RFP (November 22, 2021) is such to allow the city and selected partner applicant and to further develop the project to prepare a Pre-Application due to IEDA no later than January 28, 2022. IEDA will review Pre-Applications and determine whether to invite communities to submit a Full-Application.

If invited to submit, Full-Applications will be due by April 15, 2022. While not required for this RFP or the Pre-Application, Full-Applications will require the owner/developer to prepare Green Streets Development Plan on how the project will incorporate sustainable building practices to meet the State of Iowa Green Streets Criteria. Information on the Green Streets Criteria is online at: <https://www.iowaeda.com/green-streets/>.

It is expected that grant awards will be announced in June of 2022. The Owner will have two years from signing of a grant contract between the City and IEDA to complete the project. Construction will be expected to begin within 6 to 12 months of an executed contract.

By submitting a proposal, the owner agrees that, if selected, to partner with the City in developing an application and provide necessary materials and access to the project site to prepare and submit application in a timely manner.

VII. KEY DATES

- October 18, 2021: This RFP issued by City
- November 22, 2021: Proposals in response to RFP due to the City by 4:00 PM
- December 6, 2021: Proposal recommend and city council votes on proposals (tentative)
- January 28, 2022: Pre-Applications due to IEDA
- April 15, 2022: Final-Applications due to IEDA (if invited to apply following pre-app)
- June 2022: Funding awards announced at Iowa Downtown Conference (tentative)
- 24 months to complete project from grant award

Proposals for this RFP are due to the City no later than 4:00 PM on Monday, November 22, 2021.

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Or

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