

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

City of Decorah sponsored application for the Iowa Economic Development Authority's Downtown Housing Grant

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") Downtown Housing Grant ("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 Downtown Housing Grant, contact Travis Goedken, City Manager at (563) 382-3651 or citymanager@decorahia.org.

II. ABOUT THE DOWNTOWN HOUSING GRANT

The newly created Downtown Housing Grant provides \$20 million in financial assistance for projects supporting local downtown revitalization through new and renovated housing opportunities in communities under 30,000. This funding invests in building rehabilitation projects to increase local upper floor housing options. Projects creating or improving under 10 housing units are eligible for \$100,000 to \$300,000 while projects creating 10 plus units are eligible for \$100,000 to \$600,000. The City must be the applicant. If the application is funded, a sub-grant agreement will be made between the city and the private owner/developer.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Projects located in a community under 30,000 in population (2020 census)
- Project focus must be the creation of new upper story housing in existing downtown buildings
- Project can include one building per community or two adjacent buildings with same ownership
- Vacant school buildings or other large, underutilized facilities within the vicinity of the downtown area
- Project expenses can include:
 - Upper floor rehabilitation for housing
 - Structural stabilization of historic downtown buildings
 - Exterior building improvements relating to the housing project
 - Code and accessibility improvements for apartments
 - Exterior building amenities that directly complement the housing project (e.g. patios, tenant parking, etc.)
 - Residential units must have some interior amenity component (e.g. rooftop patios, laundry, LED lighting, High Efficiency HVAC, etc.)

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Projects that include first floor storefront housing or residential temporary lodging
- Projects located outside of the downtown district vicinity
- Projects that do not include a housing element
- Acquisition costs not considered part of the project costs or eligible expenses

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, with 25% local match required. If a grant application is submitted, the city may 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.

The focus of the project must be the creation of new downtown housing units in the area. Residential units will be subject to amenity requirements including laundry. Short-term, vacation rental housing units are not eligible.

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

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 would result in additional workforce housing.
- 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 an application due to IEDA no later than January 31, 2022.

It is expected that grant awards will be announced March 23, 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 31, 2022: Applications due to IEDA
- March 23, 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.

Proposals should be directed to:

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

Or

citymanager@decorahia.org