

The Iowa Great Places program seeks to have a transformative impact on community vitality and quality of life for Iowans. The program provides Iowa Great Places designation and funding for related vertical infrastructure projects as defined by the [Iowa Code 8.57](#). The program goals are to align State and local resources to cultivate the unique and authentic qualities of Iowa neighborhoods, districts, communities and regions in order to make them great places to live and work. The program objectives are to support projects that are integrated with a shared vision and set of strategies, involve significant partnerships and collaboration, and focus on the development of local and regional assets in the following areas:

- Arts and Culture
- Built Environment
- Business Development
- Diversity
- Entrepreneurial Incentives
- Historic Fabric
- Housing Options
- Natural Environment
- Retail Amenities

Funding for Iowa Great Places is made possible through an annual appropriation by the Iowa Legislature. The program is administered by the Iowa Arts Council, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. Applicants must adhere to the funding policies of the Iowa Arts Council.

## Timeline

### **May 2, 2016 | Letter of Intent Deadline**

The deadline to submit an online letter of intent to the program is 11:59 PM, May 2, 2016.

### **May 9, 2016 | Invitation to Submit Application**

Eligible applicants invited to submit an application to the program will be notified by May 9, 2016. An invitation to submit a full application is neither a guarantee of funding nor an endorsement of the applicant or project by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs.

### **June 1, 2016 | Application Deadline for Invited Applicants**

The deadline to submit an invitation only, online application to the program is 11:59 PM, June 1, 2016

### **June 20-24, 2016 | Site Visits**

Eligible applicants invited to submit a full application to the program may be required to host a site visit with Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs staff and Iowa Great Places Citizen Advisory Board members.

### **July 1, 2016 | Designation and Funding Decision Notification**

Applicants will be notified of designation and funding award decisions by July 1, 2016.

### **July 1, 2016-June 30, 2019 | Funding Period**

All project activities and incurred expenses must occur within the eligible funding period of July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2019. Funding is awarded to grant recipients on a reimbursement basis after expenses have been incurred for approved project activities.

## **Funding & Designation**

### **Iowa Great Places Designation**

Iowa neighborhoods, districts, communities and regions are awarded Iowa Great Places designation in addition to funding as a point of civic pride. Designation may be used in signage and marketing material to promote the area. Designation remains in effect beyond the eligible funding period.

### **Grant Request Amount**

Grant awards are made on a case-by-case basis by the Iowa Great Places Citizen Advisory Board. From fiscal years 2012- 2015, grant awards ranged from \$15,000 to \$400,000 with an average grant award of \$157,000.

### **Available Funding**

Funding for Iowa Great Places is made possible through an annual appropriation of \$1,000,000 from the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund to the Iowa Great Places program by the Iowa Legislature. The appropriation, in addition to remaining funds from past appropriations, constitutes the available funding for the program to award. The Iowa Great Places Citizens Advisory Board reserves the right to withhold awarding 100% of available funds if submitted applications do not meet competitive thresholds. Remaining available funding would be offered in a future grant cycle.

### **Match Requirement**

Applicants are required to demonstrate investment in projects by providing cash match that is a minimum of 50% of the total grant amount requested from the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. The cash match must be secured, dedicated to eligible vertical infrastructure expenses, a legitimate part of the proposed project and must be expended within the eligible funding period. The 50% match requirement may be raised through a combination of public and private sources but may not include in-kind donations of goods or services, unsecured funding, or loans. While the minimum match requirement is 50% cash, competitive proposals will demonstrate broad-based financial support for their project and that public funding sources have been adequately leveraged to seek and obtain private dollars.

- Cash match constitutes actual cash contributed to direct project expenses by the applicant or other funding sources.
- Funding from the state government that is already being used as match for another program, including other funds from the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, cannot be used to meet the match requirement.

### **Funding Period**

All project activities and incurred expenses must occur within the eligible funding period of July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2019. Funding is awarded to grant recipients on a reimbursement basis after expenses have been incurred for approved project activities within the eligible funding period. Expenses that are incurred before or after the eligible funding period are not eligible for reimbursement.

## Applicant Requirements

A single entity must be selected to serve as the primary applicant for proposed projects that involve collaboration between a consortium of partners. The selected entity must meet the definition of eligible applicant. The applicant will be responsible for submitting eligible material during the application process and will be the entity legally obligated to the terms of the grant agreement if awarded designation and funding. Partners and collaborating entities are not subject to the eligibility requirements but may be subject to financial and programmatic review during the selection process.

### Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must be one of the following types of entities. Entities who do not meet these requirements are not eligible to apply.

- Federally tax exempt 501(c)3 nonprofit organization incorporated and physically located in Iowa
  - Physical location is defined as maintaining a current home office and registered agent address in Iowa defined by Iowa Code [490.501](#) as well as maintaining a primary staff presence physically located and working in Iowa.
- Unit of local, county or federally-recognized tribal government physically located in Iowa
- Municipal agencies with 28E agreements physically located in Iowa
- Currently designated Iowa Great Place grant recipients who remain within their three year period of funding eligibility who seek additional funding for related projects

### Ineligible Applicants

- Unit of state or federal government
- For-profit or commercial entity
- Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs grantees who have an outstanding final report or who have been placed on a department funding moratorium
- Previously designated Iowa Great Place grant recipients who no longer remain within their three year period of funding eligibility who seek additional funding for related projects

## Project & Budget Requirements

Iowa Great Places funding supports eligible vertical infrastructure expenses that are essential to the completion of proposed projects. Eligible projects must involve the creation or renovation of vertical infrastructure for the benefit of the public. Applicants may request funding for multiple, prioritized projects that are tied to a community vision and strategic plan. All project activities must have a clear beginning and end date within the eligible funding period. Examples of eligible projects include but are not limited to development of cultural facilities and amenities, public art, building rehabilitation, way-finding signage, mixed use developments, streetscape enhancements, and development of trails and parks.

### Eligible Project Activities & Expenses

- Land acquisition
- Construction
- Major renovation and repair of buildings or appurtenant structures
- Site development
- Park, trail, or permanent design exhibits

## Ineligible Project Activities & Expenses

- Routine, reoccurring maintenance
- Operational expenses
- Ongoing utilities
- Lease of a building or appurtenant structures without a lease-purchase agreement
- Stand-alone planning and design phase of project
- Projects that occur prior to or after the funding period

The program requires that the grant request and cash match be dedicated to eligible vertical infrastructure project expenses, legitimate parts of the proposed project and incurred and expended within the eligible funding period. Applicants may identify supplemental project expenses that occur before or after the eligible funding period or that are otherwise not eligible to be part of the grant request or cash match in the application; however, supplemental expenses may not be included in the grant request or required cash match. Applicants that include ineligible expenses in the grant request or required match will be considered ineligible.

## Online Application Submission

Applicants must submit letters of intent and applications via the Iowa Arts Council's SlideRoom, an online application portal. Applications will not be accepted in any other format. Late, incomplete or ineligible applications will not be accepted. Applicants can access the current online application requirements at [www.iowaartscouncil.slideroom.com](http://www.iowaartscouncil.slideroom.com). Applicants must create a login to view the full application requirements for the program. Applicants can visit the [SlideRoom Help Desk](#) for technical assistance related to the online submission.

## Review Process

Submitted letters of intent are reviewed by staff for completion, eligibility, and adherence to published guidelines. Letters of intent are reviewed as submitted. New information or subsequent clarification submitted after a program deadline is not considered. Staff will also review an applicant's record of compliance and good standing with the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, State and Federal government. Applicants submitting letters of intent determined to be eligible will be invited to submit a full application to the program. Applications or applicants determined by staff to be ineligible will not be invited to submit full applications and are specifically denied any appeals process. Applicants may review the department appeals policy for information on grounds for appeal and the appeal process.

Full applications will be reviewed by staff for completion, eligibility and adherence to published guidelines. Applications are reviewed as submitted. New application information or subsequent application clarification submitted after a program deadline is not considered. Eligible applications will be referred to a competitive review by a panel of Iowa Great Places Citizens Advisory Board members and Iowa professionals with experience commensurate to the grant program. Applicants invited to submit an application may also be required to undergo a site visit by the Iowa Great Places Citizen Advisory Board and Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs staff. The Iowa Great Places Board reserves the right to recommend conditional funding and partial funding of initiatives. Designation and funding recommendations will be submitted by the Iowa Great Places Citizen Advisory Board to the Director of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs for consideration and approval. The applicant's authorized official will receive award notification. All funding decisions are final and may not be appealed due to dissatisfaction. Applicants may review the department appeals policy for information on grounds for appeal and the appeal process.

# Scoring Rubric

## Letter of Intent Review

Letters of Intent must demonstrate evidence of the following:

- Projects demonstrate a commitment to the development of local or regional assets in the areas of arts and culture, historic fabric, architecture, natural environment, housing options, amenities, entrepreneurial incentive for business development, or diversity
- Projects are related to a guiding vision plan and interrelated set of strategies supported by multiple partners
- Projects have broad based financial support
- Applicant has a strong record of financial performance
- Applicant has strong organizational capacity and strong record of programmatic performance and service to constituents
- Applicant has prioritized projects that can be completed within funding period

## Application Review – Invitation Only

The Iowa Great Places Scoring Rubric will be used to evaluate full applications. Each section has criteria and corresponding point values to ensure a fair review process. The rubric is on a scale of 36 points.

| <b>APPLICANT PROFILE: 3 points possible</b>   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 3   | 2  | 1  |
| Applicant demonstrates exceptional programming or services that clearly advance its mission and serve its target population. Applicant demonstrates a strong record of progress through relevant notable achievements and strategic priorities. | Applicant offers programming or services that support its mission and target population. Relevant notable achievements or strategic priorities are identified. | Applicant's programming or services are limited, unclear or do not support its mission or serve its target population. Relevant notable achievements or strategic priorities are not identified. |

| <b>VISION PLAN: 3 points possible</b>   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 3   | 2  | 1   |
| Vision plan strongly exemplifies bold thought and innovation, fosters a sense of identity by cultivating the unique and authentic qualities of place and will clearly have a transformative impact on community vitality and quality of life. | Vision plan addresses bold thought and innovation, a sense of place and identity and may have a transformative impact on community vitality and quality of life. | Vision plan does not represent bold thought and innovation, does not adequately foster a sense of place and identity and will not have a transformative impact on community vitality and quality of life. |

| <b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION: 3 points possible</b>  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 3  | 2  | 1  |
| Projects will significantly develop a diverse mix of local and regional assets as defined in Great Places Guidelines. Goals of the projects are exemplary, well defined and clearly integrated with the community vision plan. | Projects will develop at least one local or regional asset as defined in the Great Places Guidelines. Goals of the proposed projects are satisfactory and address the community vision plan. | Projects do not develop local or regional assets as defined in the Great Places Guidelines. Goals of the projects are inadequate, unclear or do not relate to the community vision plan. |

| <b>PROJECT PRIORITIZATION: 3 points possible</b>  |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 3   | 2  | 1  |
| Prioritization of projects is well-defined. Selected projects reflect a clear consensus, sense of timing, and significant momentum. | Prioritization of projects is addressed. Selected projects reflect some degree of consensus, sense of timing and momentum. | Prioritization of projects is inadequately addressed. Selected projects reflect no clear consensus, sense of timing or momentum. |

| <b>PUBLIC ACCESS: 3 points possible</b>   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 3   | 2  | 1   |
| Target population for project is well-defined and its relevance to project evident. Projects will be highly accessible due to clear and deliberate plans for accessibility and to disseminate and market activities to target population. | Target population for the project is identified. Plans for accessibility and to disseminate and market project activities to target population are satisfactory. | Target population for the project is unclear. Plans for accessibility and to market project activities to target population are inadequate. |

| <b>PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION: 3 points possible</b>   |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| 3  | 2   | 1  |
| Confident the projects will be successfully realized through a strong implementation objectives supported by a clear timeline of activities. Project location is ideal as demonstrated by clear, relevant criteria and a well-defined process is in place for acquisition of land, construction, major renovation and repair, site development, or permanent installments. | Projects are achievable through identified implementation objectives and a timeline of activities. Project location is practical as demonstrated by criteria and a process is in place for acquisition of land, construction, major renovation and repair, site development, or permanent installments. | Concerns about project achievability. Implementation objectives and timeline of activities are inadequate. Rationale for project location is unclear. Criteria and process are not in place for acquisition of land, construction, major renovation and repair, site development, or permanent installments. |

| <b>PROJECT PARTNERS: 3 points possible</b>  |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 3   | 2  | 1   |
| Projects are supported by multiple, diverse partners. Key partner roles and responsibilities are well defined and will enhance the project's. | Projects are supported by partners. Key partner roles and responsibilities are identified. | Projects are supported by minimal partners. Key partner roles and responsibilities are unclear or not identified. |

| <b>PROJECT EVALUATION: 3 points possible</b>   |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 3  | 2  | 1  |
| Project uses strong qualitative and quantitative measures to analyze achievement of goals and implementation objectives. Project has appropriate methods in place to collect data on evaluation measures. Evaluation results will clearly enhance and sustain the future maintenance and management of the projects. | Project identifies methods or measures to analyze achievement of goals or implementation objectives. Evaluation results may sustain the future maintenance and management of the projects. | Evaluation methods and measures are weak, inadequate or unclear. Evaluation results will not impact the future maintenance and management of the projects. |

| <b>PROJECT BUDGET: 3 points possible</b>  |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 3   | 2   | 1  |
| Project budget and intended use of requested funds are clear and appropriate. Project demonstrates financial support by leveraging diverse sources of local and private cash match that are well-defined. | Project budget, intended use of requested funds and sources of applicant match are identified and adequate. | Project budget, intended use of requested funds or sources of applicant match are unclear or inadequate. |

| <b>MEDIA SUPPORT MATERIAL: 3 points possible</b>   |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 3  | 2   | 1   |
| Support material is highly relevant to the projects, of high quality, and clearly supports the projects' excellence. | Support material relates to the projects and is of average quality. | Support material is not relevant to the projects, of poor quality or does not support the projects' excellence. |

| <b>LOCAL SUPPORT MATERIAL: 3 points possible</b>  |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 3   | 2  | 1   |
| Local support material is highly relevant to the projects, of high quality and clearly supports the project's excellence. | Local support material is relevant to the projects and of average quality. | Local support material is not relevant to the projects, of poor quality or does not support the project's excellence. |

| <b>GRANTSMANSHIP &amp; CASE FOR SUPPORT: 3 points possible</b>   |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 3  | 2   | 1   |
| The application is clear, concise and well-composed. Case for support is exemplary and merits investment from the State. | The application is clear. Case for support is adequate. | Application is unclear or poorly composed. Case for support is inadequate or does not merit state investment. |

## Glossary of Terms and Definitions

Applicants should refer to the glossary for clarification of program terms and definitions.

## Contact

Potential applicants are encouraged to review all published material and contact Iowa Arts Council staff, Veronica O'Hern at 515-281-3293 or [veronica.ohern@iowa.gov](mailto:veronica.ohern@iowa.gov), with questions well in advance of application deadlines.