

The Iowa Innovation in Homelessness Incubator Pitch Competition calls for forward-thinking proposals aimed at addressing homelessness prevention and/or response.

We seek innovative ideas that aspire to create a state where homelessness is rare, brief and nonrecurring and support is readily available to those in need. The goal is to redefine the landscape of homelessness prevention and response systems and rethink how assistance for persons experiencing homelessness in Iowa is delivered.

This initiative challenges Iowa housing and community leaders to think innovatively about how we can implement new approaches to alleviate homelessness. Whether it involves developing essential resources, introducing innovative tools, enhancing services, fostering essential partnerships, or streamlining processes, we're in search of solutions that transcend traditional funding mechanisms and programs.

IFA has allocated up to \$200,000 in total funding for winning pitches, with each individual award limited to a maximum of \$100,000 per applicant. This funding will support the transformation of concepts into pilot initiatives, laying the groundwork for long-term impact, potential expansion, and measurable, life-saving outcomes.

The source of funding for the award will be from state funds not subject to traditional federal program requirements, providing greater flexibility to innovate around homelessness prevention and response.

2026 APPLICATION TIMELINE

- **February 4:** Application webinar
- **July 6:** Application deadline at 5:00 p.m. CT
- **July 24:** Finalists notified
- **September 9:** Finalists make their pitches at the HousingIowa Conference in Des Moines

GUIDELINES

- Proposals must be led and submitted by a State of Iowa nonprofit service provider, Continuum of Care, certified Local Housing Trust Fund, City, or County or by a statewide association, federally recognized Tribe, or Tribally Designated Housing Entity. One or more Iowa nonprofit agencies that provides services related to emergency shelter, street outreach, homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing, and/or permanent supportive housing to persons experiencing homelessness in Iowa must be a key partner in the proposal if not the lead applicant. Past winners are ineligible.
- The maximum funding request is \$100,000 per proposal.
- Proposals must be strategically aimed at preventing or alleviating homelessness and have the potential to be replicated or expanded across the state (funding requests specific to financing the existing general operations of individual agencies are ineligible).
- Special consideration will be given to proposals that include any of the following aspects:
 - Partnerships between health systems and homelessness response systems or other cross-system collaborations
 - Efforts to address unsheltered homelessness, including but not limited to Homeless Court Programs
 - Proposals aimed at addressing:
 - Rising acuity levels of persons experiencing homelessness with higher acuity indicated by more complex, co-occurring issues that are likely to impact overall housing stability
 - Homelessness among Iowans age 65 and older or targeted subset populations among older Iowans
 - Housing instability among families with children, including but not limited to families with child welfare system involvement
- Supported employment or other initiatives focused on increasing the self-sufficiency of persons experiencing homelessness through employment, especially collaborations with local employers
- Initiatives to address workforce recruitment and retention within front-line homelessness response systems
- Partnerships with local landlords and/or public housing authorities, including incentive programs aimed at expanding housing opportunities for persons experiencing homelessness
- Data-driven initiatives to alleviate homelessness
- Proposals must be submitted using the application form(s) provided by IFA and should be centered on innovation and supported by evidence-based practices.
- Partnerships are highly encouraged but not required.
- Finalists will be determined by IFA and will be invited to make their pitch to a panel of judges at the HousingIowa Conference in Des Moines on Wednesday, September 9.
- Entrants are not guaranteed an opportunity to pitch for funding and must sign an acknowledgement form prior to submission of proposal.
- IFA reserves the right to award funding to one, multiple, or no winners at its sole discretion.

Application and more information
will be available at
iowafinance.com/homeless