IOWA RURAL HERITAGE REVITALIZATION GRANT GUIDELINES

The Iowa Rural Heritage Revitalization Grant supports the rehabilitation of historic properties — of national, state or local significance — in rural Iowa. The program's purpose is to preserve these resources while fostering economic development.

Funded through the National Park Service's Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Program, this initiative provides subgrants for physical preservation involving properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places or designated as National Historic Landmarks. All work must follow The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation and comply with all applicable federal requirements.

Timeline

January 7
Informational webinar, 10 a.m.

March 6
Application deadline (11:59 p.m. CDT).

July 31, 2027
Projects must be completed.

August 31, 2027
Final reports and reimbursement requests due.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Use of Funding

Expenses must be essential to completing the proposed project. All grant-funded costs must be eligible direct project expenses, represent legitimate portions of the project work and be incurred and expended during the eligible funding period.

All projects must comply with The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

Eligible expenses include:
- Physical work on the historic resource.
- Required reports and related documentation.
- Personnel or consultant costs.
- Architectural/engineering plans and specifications (may not exceed 20% of the total project cost).
- Travel costs within federal per diem limits (gsa.gov); mileage reimbursed at the Iowa rate.
- Recording fees for the preservation easement.
- Costs for fabrication and installation of a required project sign.

Ineligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Budget shortfalls.
- Deficit or debt reduction.
- Expenses incurred prior to or after the eligible funding period.
- Lobbying activity.
- Costs associated with preparing the application.
- Work that does not meet program requirements.
- Equipment purchases ($5,000 or more per unit with more than one year of useful life) not preapproved by the National Park Service.
- Property acquisition or moving costs.
- Costs unallowable under 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E — Cost Principles.

Eligible Applicants

- Nonprofit organizations registered with the Iowa Secretary of State and exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or applying through a qualified fiscal agent (per 261 — 301.3 of the Iowa Administrative Code).
- Units of local or county government in Iowa.
- Federally recognized tribal councils located in Iowa.

Ineligible Applicants

- Individuals.
- Educational institutions or affiliated organizations whose primary orientation, mission and purpose are education and/or awarding academic credits.
- For-profit businesses.
- Political parties.
- Labor unions.
- State or federal government agencies.
- Organizations primarily supporting an ineligible entity.
- Professional or national service organizations.
- Organizations not in compliance with Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) or State Historic Preservation Office requirements or listed on IEDA's funding moratorium list.

Eligible Projects

Projects must involve physical preservation work on a resource that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places or designated a National Historic Landmark.

All properties must be located in rural areas, defined as:
- Municipalities with fewer than 50,000 residents, and
- Areas not within a 2020 census-defined urbanized area.

Applicants must verify rural eligibility using the U.S. Department of Agriculture's online map.

All properties receiving improvements must be owned by the applicant.

FUNDING

Grant Request Amount

Applicants may request $75,000 to $150,000 for eligible expenses.

The Iowa Economic Development Authority may award only a portion of the requested amount. The program anticipates supporting five to 10 awards totaling $750,000.

Match Requirement

Applicants must provide 30% cash match of the grant request.

Examples:

Grant Amount (70%)	Cash Match (30%)	Total Project Cost (100%)
$75,000	$32,143	$107,143
$105,000	$45,000	$150,000
$150,000	$64,286	$214,286

Matching funds:
- Must be cash (donations, grants, reserves, revenue).
- Must be dedicated solely to this project.
- Must meet the same cost eligibility requirements as grant funds.
- May not come from state or federal government sources.

Procurement and Consultant Rates

The maximum consultant rate is 120% of the federal civil service General Schedule pay scale (GS-15, Step 10). That rate was $91.97 per hour in 2024.

Recipients must select qualified subcontractors and follow federal procurement rules under 2 CFR 200.318-327 or 2 CFR 200.317, as applicable. Documentation of competitive selection — or a justified sole-source procurement — must be submitted before reimbursement.

Disbursement of Funds

Funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis and may be requested quarterly.

The final 20% of funds will not be released until:
- The final project report is reviewed.
- The State Historic Preservation Office conducts a site visit.
- The preservation easement is recorded.

REQUIREMENTS FOR FUNDED PROJECTS

Preservation Easement

A 10-year preservation easement is required for all grants between $75,000 and $150,000. The easement ensures the long-term preservation of the funded resource.

Federal Compliance

All funded projects must comply with the National Historic Preservation Act (Sections 106 and 110) and the National Environmental Policy Act. The National Park Service conducts these reviews with the State Historic Preservation Office.

Allow at least 90 days for the federal review after the contract is signed. No physical work can begin until the federal review is completed.

Professional Standards

All projects must comply with The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Archeology and Historic Preservation. For most building projects, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for rehabilitation apply.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Standards, along with the National Park Service's Preservation Briefs and other technical materials that offer guidance on a variety of preservation issues. Applicants must demonstrate an understanding of these standards, as well as their intention and ability to adhere to them throughout the project.

Requirements:
- Consultants — including architects, architectural historians, historians and archaeologists — must meet The Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards.
- Contractors must have documented experience with historic buildings.
- Approval by the State Historic Preservation Office is required for key professionals.

Potential consultant resources:
- Preservation Iowa's directory of preservation-focused firms.
- American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter, for preservation services.

In all cases, applicants should request references, visit completed projects when possible and consult with property owners about their experience.

Accessibility Requirements

Applicants must demonstrate compliance — or progress toward compliance — with federal accessibility laws, which prohibit discrimination based on physical and/or mental disabilities (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990). Applications must address:
- Programmatic accessibility (how services are delivered)
- Structural accessibility (physical access to facilities)

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Unique Entity Identifier

Applicants must maintain an active registration with the federal System for Award Management (sam.gov) throughout the application period and, if awarded, through the duration of the grant. Upon registration, entities are assigned a unique entity identifier, which is required to conduct business with the federal government.

Indirect Costs

Applicants who are unable to calculate direct overhead and administrative costs associated with the proposed project may include indirect costs instead. Indirect costs represent overhead, administrative or general operating expenses that are not readily identifiable with, or are difficult to assign to, a specific project. Examples include expenses for operating and maintaining facilities and equipment, rent, utilities, supplies and administrative salaries.

The allowable indirect cost rate is either:
- The current negotiated indirect cost rate with the applicant's cognizant federal agency, or
- A 15% de minimis rate.

The rate is applied to modified total direct costs (MTDC), which generally include salaries and wages, materials and supplies, services and travel. MTDC excludes expenses such as equipment purchases and rental costs.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Online Submission

Applications must be submitted via the online SlideRoom portal. No other format will be accepted. A user account is required to access and complete the full application.

Applicants may submit only one application. Late, incomplete or ineligible applications will not be considered.

For technical portal assistance, visit help.liaisonedu.com.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Photographs

Provide photographs, a floor plan and a photo key illustrating the project scope and need.

Requirements:

- Clear, well-lit, in-focus images.
- At least one, and no more than 20, images. Submit either:
  - A single pdf (not to exceed 10 megabytes) with up to 20 captioned photos, or
  - Up to 20 individual digital images (not to exceed 5 megabytes each). Use the file name to describe each photograph.

Other Materials

Optional supporting documents include:
- Architectural drawings
- Rehabilitation studies
- Materials testing reports (i.e., mortar analysis)
- Up to three letters of support
- Certified local government (CLG) letter, if applicable. (CLGs in good standing, based on their 2025 annual report, receive extra consideration.) To confirm whether your community is a CLG, contact historic.preservation@iowaeda.com.

Applicant Overview (not scored)

Briefly describe the organization's history, mission, community served and programs/services provided.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Quarterly Reports

Recipients must submit quarterly progress reports using an electronic form, provided after the award announcement.

Final Report

Due within 30 days of project completion, the report must include:
- Summary of the project
- Description of impact
- Photographs of completed work

REVIEW PROCESS

Eligibility Review

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) reviews applications for completeness, eligibility and adherence to guidelines. Applications or applicants deemed ineligible or incomplete will not advance. Determinations regarding eligibility or completeness constitute final agency action.

IEDA may contact applicants if additional information is required; however, new information or clarifications submitted after the program deadline will not be considered unless specifically requested by an IEDA program manager.

Staff will also verify the applicant's record of compliance and good standing with IEDA, other state agencies (including but not limited to the Iowa Department of Revenue), and federal agencies or departments.

Competitive Review

Eligible applications are reviewed by a panel of preservation professionals and subject-matter experts. Applications are scored and ranked according to the published scoring rubric. Panel recommendations are submitted to the director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

SCORING RUBRIC

APPLICANT CAPACITY

EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Applicant clearly demonstrates strong capacity to manage a federal grant. The local project manager has the experience, tools and ability to complete the project successfully.	Applicant adequately demonstrates capacity to manage a federal grant, but reviewer has concerns about the successful completion of the project.	Applicant provides a weak explanation of its capacity to manage a federal grant.	Applicant does not demonstrate capacity to manage the grant.
Connection to Iowa's Rural Heritage			
EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Applicant clearly describes how the resource is connected to and reflects Iowa's rural heritage.	Applicant adequately describes how the resource is connected to and reflects Iowa's rural heritage.	Applicant provides an insufficient description of how the resource is connected to or reflects Iowa's rural heritage.	Applicant does not connect the resource to Iowa's rural heritage.

RESOURCE/PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE

EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Applicant clearly identifies the historical resource and presents strong, evidence-based justification for its value to the people of Iowa. Reviewer has no questions about the resource's significance.	Applicant identifies the historical resource and offers an adequate argument for its value. Some supporting evidence is included, though questions about its significance remain.	Applicant sufficiently identifies the resource but provides inadequate argumentation or evidence for its historical significance.	Applicant does not identify the resource and/or does not present an argument or evidence for its significance.

Historical Significance

EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Applicant clearly explains how the historical resource has national or international significance.	Applicant clearly explains how the historical resource has state or local significance.	Applicant provides an insufficient explanation of the resource's significance at any level.	Applicant does not address the resource's level of significance.

IMPLEMENTATION

Project Planning

EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Reviewer is confident that the planned project is the highest preservation priority.	Applicant describes the planning process, but reviewer has questions about whether the work is a priority or sufficiently planned.	Applicant provides limited evidence supporting the project as a preservation priority.	Applicant does not discuss project planning or provides unclear information.

Project Overview

EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Applicant clearly describes the scope of work and references appropriate historic preservation standards. Reviewer is confident the project is well-planned, meets preservation standards and will be successfully implemented.	Applicant describes the scope of work but leaves reviewer with questions about project specifics, feasibility or understanding of preservation standards.	Applicant provides insufficient information about the scope of work and/or how preservation standards will be applied.	Applicant does not explain the scope of work, how it will be done and/or whether it meets preservation standards. Reviewer lacks confidence in successful implementation.

Project Timeline

EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Timeline is appropriate and realistic for all work elements. Reviewer has no questions about completion within the grant period.	Timeline is appropriate for some work elements, but reviewer questions feasibility for others.	Timeline is not appropriate for most work elements, or reviewer questions whether the project can be completed within the contract period.	Timeline is missing, inappropriate or unrealistic for completion within the grant period.

Supporting Documents and Photos			
EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Relevant supporting materials (e.g., photographs, drawings, mortar analysis, rehabilitation studies, letters of support*) clearly demonstrate the need for each work item. *The applicant does not need to provide all listed items, only those relevant to the project.	Supporting materials adequately demonstrate the need for most work items.	Some helpful materials are provided but are insufficient to fully demonstrate the need for the proposed scope.	Supporting materials are unclear, unhelpful or not provided.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Importance to Local Community			
EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Applicant clearly identifies the rural community and provides evidence supporting the project's positive economic impact. Applicant also clearly explains how the project's impact will be measured.	Applicant adequately identifies the rural community and offers a basic argument for the project's economic impact. Applicant adequately describes how the impact will be measured.	Applicant provides weak identification of the rural community and/or an unconvincing case for the project's economic impact. Reviewer has questions about the project's potential impact and how it will be measured.	Applicant does not identify the rural community and does not present an argument for the project's economic impact, or the project has no economic impact on the rural community.

Public Accessibility			
EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Historical resource is or will be regularly accessible to the public.	Resource is accessible, but reviewer has questions about the applicant's access plan.	Resource is accessible only on a limited basis.	Resource is not accessible to the public.

Project Promotion			
EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Applicant outlines a strong plan for sharing the resource on-site and across media platforms.	Applicant offers a limited plan for sharing information on-site and across media platforms.	Applicant provides a weak plan for sharing the resource on-site and across media platforms.	Applicant does not identify a plan for sharing the resource on-site or across digital/traditional media.

Sustainability			
EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Applicant clearly explains how the resource and project benefits will be sustained into the future.	Applicant adequately explains sustainability, but reviewer has some questions.	Applicant provides a weak sustainability plan.	Applicant does not address sustainability.

Critical Need			
EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Applicant presents a compelling case for the project's critical need.	Applicant presents an adequate case, though reviewer has some questions.	Applicant presents a weak case for critical need.	Applicant does not demonstrate critical need.

Connection to Preservation Plan			
EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Applicant makes a clear, compelling connection to an existing preservation plan.	Applicant makes an adequate connection.	Applicant provides a weak connection.	Applicant does not make a connection.

Easement Management			
EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Applicant provides a sufficient and clear plan for managing the easement associated with these funds.	Applicant provides a limited plan for easement management.	Applicant provides an insufficient plan.	Applicant does not provide an easement management plan.

BUDGET

Budget Clarity and Match			
EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Project budget and intended use of funds are clear. Applicant identifies the cash match, and all required match has been secured.	Budget and intended use of funds are adequately explained. Applicant identifies match sources, and some of the match has been secured.	Budget or intended use of funds is unclear. Match sources are identified but not fully secured.	Budget is incomplete or inaccurate, and required match has not been secured.

Budget Propriety			
EXEMPLARY — 5	ADEQUATE — 3	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT — 1	DEFICIENT/MISSING — 0
Budget is appropriate for the work proposed and clearly ties to the scope. Applicant provides strong documentation that numbers are reliable and reasonable.	Budget is appropriate for most work items and adequately itemized. Applicant provides adequate documentation that numbers are reliable and reasonable.	Budget is not appropriate for most work items and/or lacks a strong connection to the scope. Documentation is insufficient.	Budget is inappropriate and/or not connected to the scope. Documentation is missing.

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT STATUS

GOOD STANDING — 5
The certified local government (CLG) is in good standing and has met all program requirements as documented in their 2025 CLG annual report.

DECISION NOTIFICATION

The Iowa Economic Development Authority will notify applicants of all decisions, including those not funded. Applicants are asked to refrain from contacting staff for application status updates while decisions are pending.

Projects may not begin until a contract is fully executed and a kickoff meeting has taken place. Costs incurred before the contract start date are ineligible.

The project manager will conduct the kickoff meeting with the property owner and local project manager. The meeting will review the scope of work, schedule, required reviews, project goals, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and all federal grant requirements. Additional progress meetings between the application and State Historic Preservation Office staff will be held as needed.

CONTACT

For program questions, contact the State Historic Preservation Office at historic.preservation@iowaeda.com well in advance of the application deadline.

The Iowa Economic Development Authority is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to eligible applicants. For technical support submitting the online application, contact Allison Archambo, certified local government coordinator with the State Historic Preservation Office, at 515.348.6287 or allison.archambo@iowaeda.com at least two weeks before the application deadline.