



CALENDAR

The Region XII Council of Governments Newsletter

December 2025

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

COG to Offer Open Meetings and Public Records Training

December

- 17 - **Mid Iowa Dev. Fund**
3:00 PM, Virtual
- 25 & 26 - Christmas Holiday;
Office Closed

January

- 1 - **New Year's Day**;
Office Closed
- 7 - **RDC Loan Review Comm.**
11:30 AM, COG Training Room
- 8 - **Executive Board Meeting**
12:30 PM, COG Training Room

February

- 11 - **RPA TAC**
10:00 AM, COG Board Room
RDC Loan Review Comm.
11:30 AM, COG Training Room
- 12 - **Executive Board Meeting**
12:30 PM, COG Training Room
COG Housing
1:30 PM, COG Training Room
- 16 - **President's Day**;
Office Closed

Region XII COG staff, including Chris Whitaker and Rick Hunsaker, have been accepted as an approved trainer to provide Open Meetings and Public Records training by the Iowa Public Information Board. House File 706, which was enacted by the State of Iowa, requires newly elected and appointed officials to participate in a minimum of one hour of training regarding open meetings and open records law. Other significant changes involve changes to violation penalty provisions and legal dispute settlements regarding Iowa's sunshine laws.



Region XII COG will provide this in-person training to all elected and appointed officials that are members within the COG service area (cities and counties within Audubon, Carroll, Crawford, Greene, Guthrie and Sac Counties and associate member cities) at no cost. While the trainings are free to attend, reservations are required.



You may register for the following training sessions and Region XII plans to offer this session again in the future. Please click on the corresponding link to the session you would like to register (once successfully registered, you will receive a confirmation e-mail) or you may call Michelle Kooiker at 712-792-9914 to register.

[Tuesday, January 20, 6:00 PM. Panora Community Center, 115 W. Main Street, Panora.](#)

[Tuesday, January 27, 6:00 PM. Region XII COG Training Room, 1009 E. Anthony Street, Carroll.](#)

[Monday, February 2, 6:00 PM. ACED, 800 Market Street, Audubon.](#)

[Thursday, February 5, 6:00 PM. Greene County Community Center, 204 W. Harrison St, Jefferson.](#)

[Wednesday, February 11, 6:00 PM. Wall Lake Community Center, 209 2nd Street, Wall Lake.](#)

Information on additional sessions can be found at: region12cog.org/webinarspodcasts.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

John Muir, Chair
Greene Co. Supervisor

Ranell Drake, Vice Chair
Sac Co. Supervisor

Stephanie Hausman, Treasurer
Carroll Co. Supervisor

Steve Smith, Secretary
Guthrie Co. Supervisor

Don Mosinski
Audubon Co. Supervisor

Dave Muhlbauer
Crawford Co. Supervisor



Hunsaker Completes Term as NADO President

COG Executive Director Rick Hunsaker wrapped up his term as President of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) at their annual conference in Salt Lake City in November. NADO is the predominant training and advocacy organization for Economic Development Districts (EDDs) and like organizations nationwide. During his tenure as President, the U.S. Economic Development Administration was re-authorized by Congress and Hunsaker led efforts for NADO to strengthen ties with other national organizations and streamline federally assisted planning conducted by EDDs. Hunsaker will continue to serve on the Executive Committee for one year as Immediate Past President, after which he will continue on the board of directors as an ex-officio member. Hunsaker was succeeded as President by Matthew Dolge of North Carolina.



2025 Region XII Partnership Program

The COG's Partnership Program is an opportunity for private, non-government businesses and organizations to become a part of the COG's mission to provide various needed services to the region's cities and counties. Partners listed below. For more information, contact Rick Hunsaker at rhunsaker@region12cog.org. This list contains all partners as of December 11, 2025.

PLATINUM MEMBERSHIP - \$2,000 Manilla Municipal Utilities, Manilla

GOLD MEMBERSHIP - \$1,000 The Andersons Marathon Holdings LLC, Denison Home State Bank, Jefferson

SILVER MEMBERSHIP - \$500 Bank Iowa, Denison

- Bruner, Bruner, Reinhart & Morton, Carroll
- Commercial Savings Bank, Carroll
- Crawford County Trust & Savings Bank, Denison
- Dakota Business Finance, Sioux Falls
- Exchange State Bank, Exira
- Guthrie County REC, Guthrie Center
- Holmes-Murphy & Associates, West Des Moines
- Iowa Corn Processors, Glidden
- Iowa State Bank, Sac City
- Mid-Iowa Insurance & Real Estate, Carroll
- Midland Power Cooperative, Boone
- New Way, Scranton
- Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative, Glidden
- United Bank of Iowa, Carroll
- Western Iowa Power Cooperative, Denison

BRONZE MEMBERSHIP - \$250

- Audubon County Economic Development, Audubon
- Audubon County Memorial Hospital, Audubon
- Audubon State Bank, Audubon
- Badding Construction, Carroll
- Carroll Athletic Association, Carroll
- Carroll County Growth Partnership, Carroll
- Central Iowa Surveying, Jefferson
- Community State Bank, Paton
- Coon Rapids Municipal Utilities, Coon Rapids
- Core-Mark Midcontinent, Carroll
- Corn Belt Telephone, Wall Lake
- Crawford County Memorial Hospital, Denison
- Drees Company, Carroll
- Ed M Feld Equipment Company, Carroll
- Farmers Cooperative Elevator Company, Arcadia
- Farmers State Bank, Lake View
- Farmers State Bank, Yale
- First State Bank, Lake View
- Guthrie County Hospital, Guthrie Center
- Guthrie County State Bank, Guthrie Center
- Iowa Savings Bank, Carroll
- Iowa Trust, Panora
- JEO Consulting Group, Carroll
- Marne Elk Horn Communications, Elk Horn
- Panora Telecommunications, Panora
- Peoples Bank, Clive
- Principal Financial/Matt Ramaekers, Carroll
- St. Anthony Regional Hospital, Carroll
- Snyder & Associates, Atlantic
- Templeton Savings Bank, Templeton
- Templeton Telephone Company, Templeton
- Wall Lake Lumber Company, Wall Lake
- Western Iowa Networks, Carroll
- Westside State Bank, Westside



Western Iowa Transit Drivers Meet

Western Iowa Transit drivers and staff held their annual meeting on October 14th here at Region XII. Numerous drivers and staff were recognized for their years of service to WIT. Training was also provided at the meeting going into the winter season and included winter weather driving preparation, vehicle inspections and servicing, vehicle breakdowns and maneuvering with clients in slick and snowy conditions. WIT is proud of its drivers for another safe and successful year.





REGION XII
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Employees

25+ Years

Rick Hunsaker

Chris Whitaker

20-24 Years

Jill Anthofer

Mike Rath

15-19 Years

Shelly Codner

Tami Lehmann

Patrick Coil

10-14 Years

Christina Brown
George Hunt
Karla Janning

Tom Madsen
Lauren Mortensen
Ashley Owen
Steven Page

Michael Powers
Mollie Scott
John Shymanski

5-9 Years

Paige Alesch
Matt Cleveland
Bret Iversen

Julie Larsen
David Mahlberg

Dale Murley
William Sturm
Mark Thomsen

0-4 Years

Mary Altamirano
Rodney Ballard
David Bruck
Mark Chandler
William Cramer
Mike Curnyn
Margaret Gruba
Michael Hegstrom
Michelle Kooiker

Steve Kohtz
Jeffrey Lee
Jane Malloy
Duane McClellan
David Miller
Paul Neitzel
Brett Nieland
Shannan Potts
Linda Prince
Kevin Reese

John Reinart
Robert Riederer
Dan Rothmeyer
Danny Schmitz
Aaron Schulz
Dean Sibenaller
Scott Steffen
Mark Wiedemeier
Connor Womacks

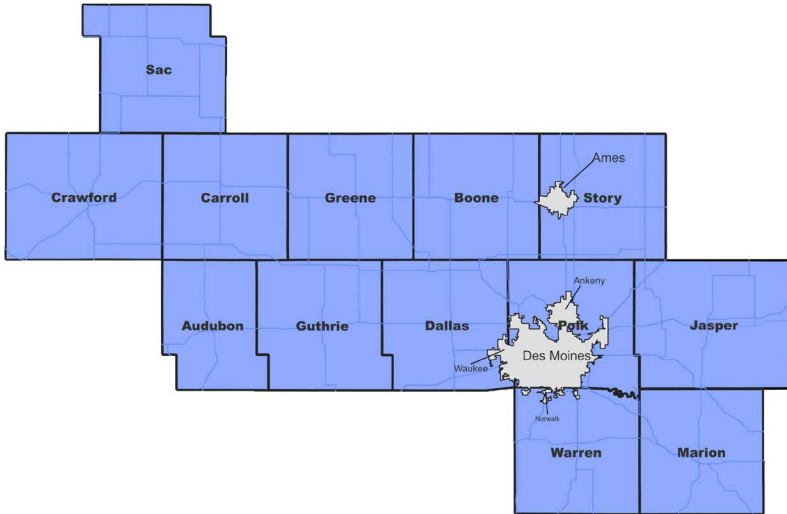
Employees as of 12-31-2025

Thank You for Your Service!

Region XII COG Accepting Business Loan Applications

Region XII COG has funding available to lend to businesses located within one of the 13 counties comprising the COG's lending territory in west central and central Iowa. Loans up to \$750,000 are available for building acquisition, equipment, and working capital, depending on the project and location. Typically, the COG supplements private lending, enabling companies to secure the full financing required for their planned projects. Interest rates are below market and for a fixed rate and term. Current rates range between 4%-5.5%. For more information about

business loans, click [HERE](#) to view the Program Guidelines.



Housing developers may borrow up to \$400,000 for working capital for up to five years to add units to a community's housing stock. For more information about housing loans, click [HERE](#) to view the Program Guidelines.

For more information, please contact Tami Lehmann at 712-775-7802 or tlehmann@region12cog.org or Scott Steffen at 712-775-7804 or ssteffen@region12cog.org.

Acquisition/Rehabilitation Continues

The COG has acquired and completely rehabilitated eight (8) homes in the region with state APRA funds or Housing Renewal Funds through IEDA/Habitat for Humanity. Completed homes have already sold in Coon Rapids, Jefferson, and Carroll. Additional homes are on the market in Coon Rapids, Churdan (shown below), Lake View, Wall Lake, and Audubon. Our next project houses have been acquired in Jefferson and Carroll, and work is anticipated to begin on these units early next year. When acquiring homes, the COG takes the following factors into consideration: 1) cost to acquire; 2) ability to rehabilitate the house; 3) post-rehab market value; 4) condition of neighboring properties; and 5) local government contribution. Concerning this last criterion, a variety of items have been provided by communities which help make a project feasible. Examples of incentives provided include cash, tree removal, interior demolition, new utility service lines, waived fees, concrete removal and replacement, property maintenance, donated houses, and donated adjacent lots. Some Realtors have provided discounted fees. The COG is currently looking to identify additional vacant houses to acquire and rehabilitate. If your community has a 657A house which is still feasible to save or you wish to discuss how we can partner in this program, contact Karla at the COG at kjanning@region12cog.org or 712-775-7825.



Before



After

December 2025 Grant Update

Upcoming Grants

Funding Program	Purpose	Deadline	Eligible Applicants
Choose Iowa Value-Added Grant Program	Increase sales of Iowa agricultural products by increasing production capacity or expanding market access for value-added projects.	January 16, 2026	Individual, business, agricultural cooperative, non-profit organization or local government.
Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program	Provides financial assistance to cities for the redevelopment or remediation of underutilized buildings.	January 29, 2026	Cities
Regional Surface Transportation Block Grant Program	Highway and roadway improvements on the federal aid system, highway safety improvements, park and ride areas, and public transit projects.	January 30, 2026	Cities, Counties, School Districts, and 501c3 Non-profits.
Regional Transportation Alternatives	Recreational Trails, Scenic Byway Improvements, and Historic Preservation of Transportation Related Structures	January 30, 2026	Cities, Counties, School Districts, and 501c3 Non-profits.
Guthrie County Community Foundation	The goal is to fund projects that improve the quality of life in Guthrie County.	January 31, 2026	Cities, Counties and 501c3 Non-profits.
Audubon County Community Foundation	The goal is to fund projects that improve the quality of life in Audubon County.	February 1, 2026	Cities, Counties and 501c3 Non-profits
Crawford County Community Foundation	Fund projects supporting needs in the areas of civic engagement, culture, health, education, and social services.	February 1, 2026	Cities, Counties and 501c3 Non-profits
Dallas County Community Foundation	The goal is to fund projects that improve the quality of life in Dallas County.	February 2, 2026	Cities, Counties and 501c3 Non-profits.
Paint Iowa Beautiful	Through a partnership with Diamond Vogel Paint of Orange City, Iowa groups can receive paint for community enhancement projects.	February 12, 2026	Public or private nonprofits organizations
Greene County Community Foundation	The goal is to fund projects that enhance the quality of life in Greene County.	February 13, 2026	Cities, Counties and 501c3 Non-profits.
Derelict Building Grant Program	The Derelict Building Program is available for Iowa towns of 5,000 or fewer residents' to address neglected commercial or public structures that have sat vacant for at least 6 months.	February 27, 2026	Cities under 5,000 population.
Build with Bags	Up to \$2,000 for the purchase of benches, tables, or playground equipment made of recycled plastic	March 30, 2026	Local governments, non-profit organizations, service clubs
Union Pacific Community Grant Program	Projects should support one of the following categories: Safety, Workforce Development, Community Vitality, and Environmental Sustainability.	April 30, 2026	Non-profits along the UP Railroad
IDNR Food Storage Capacity Grant	The competitive grant opportunity helps efforts to expand storage and cold storage of donated food.	Open	Food banks, food pantries, and other non-profit organizations.

Recently Awarded Grants

Funding Program	Recipient	Amount	Project
5-2-1-0 Healthy Choices Count	City of Manilla	\$9,500	Year 2 Program Development
5-2-1-0 Healthy Choices Count	City of Panora	\$9,500	Year 2 Program Development
FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant	Lidderdale Fire Department	\$80,952	SCBAs
Energy Infrastructure Revolving Loan Program	City of Auburn	\$237,750	Electrical Line Replacement
COPS Grant	Crawford County Sheriff's Department	\$250,000	School Resource Officers (2)
Sac County Endowment	Lake View Legion	\$12,196	Windows and Façade
Sac County Endowment	Lytton Museum	\$6,779	Electric Updates and Lighting
Sac County Endowment	Sac Community Center	\$9,923	Locker Room Remodel
Omaha Community Grant	City of Brayton	\$1,405	LED sign
CDBG Water/Sewer Fund	City of Coon Rapids	\$500,000	Water System Improvements
FRS Community Grant Program (WCCTA)	Paton-Churdan Early Learning Center	\$5,000.00	Construction of a New Daycare Center
Local Housing Trust Fund	COG Housing, Inc.	\$412,942	Regional Housing Trust Fund
Energy Infrastructure Revolving Loan Program	City of Stuart	\$2,500,000	Stuart Electric System Update

Additional grants are available through private foundations and ongoing programs. If you are looking for funding for a specific project, please contact Chris Whitaker, cwhitaker@region12cog.org or 712-775-7811, for assistance in locating funding opportunities.

New Home in Schleswig Nearing Completion

Region XII has partnered with the City of Schleswig to build two workforce



housing units on donated lots. This home is located at 103 Southern Heights Circle near the Schleswig golf course. The home is a 1,200 Sq. Ft. 2-bedroom, 2 bath home on a full basement and a 24' x 24' attached garage. The house is a Homes for Iowa modular house. This home will be ready for a new owner in January 2026. Contact Karla Janning at Region XII at kjanning@region12cog.org or 712-775-7825 for more information or a showing.

Charter Oak School Introduces Pop-Up Pickleball Courts to Boost Student Fitness and Community Health

Students at Charter Oak Ute Community School will soon enjoy a new way to stay active this winter: pop-up pickleball courts in the school gymnasium. The initiative, supported by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach's Iowa LEAP initiative and funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, aims to teach pickleball during and after school hours, encouraging kids to trade screen time for movement.

“By bringing pickleball into the school gym, we’re creating more opportunities for physical activity and helping students build healthy habits early,” Kathy Thul, Office Manager at the Crawford County Extension, said. “That’s at the heart of what Iowa LEAP is all about.”

STAFF

ADMINISTRATION

- Rick Hunsaker, Executive Director rhunsaker@region12cog.org
- Mark Thomsen, Fiscal Officer mthomsen@region12cog.org
- Julie Larsen, Fiscal Clerk..... jlarsen@region12cog.org
- Tami Lehmann, Revolving Loan Fund Administrator..... tlehmann@region12cog.org
- Scott Steffen, Loan Officer.....ssteffen@region12cog.org
- Michelle Kooiker, Executive Assistant mkooiker@region12cog.org

LOCAL ASSISTANCE

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- Shannan Potts, Regional Planner..... spotts@region12cog.org
- Connor Womacks, Regional Planner..... cwomacks@region12cog.org
- Shelly Codner, Iowa Waste Exchange Program Manager scodner@region12cog.org
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- Ashley Owen, Housing Specialist..... aowen@region12cog.org
- Brett Nieland, Housing Inspector.....bnieland@region12cog.org
- Aaron Schulz, Housing Inspector.....aschulz@region12cog.org

WESTERN IOWA TRANSIT

- Matt Cleveland, Transit Director.....mcleveland@region12cog.org
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- Chris Brown, Office Assistant..... cbrown@region12cog.org

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