



CALENDAR

The Region XII Council of Governments Newsletter

February 2026

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

Open Meetings and Open Records Trainings

Region XII COG staff, as approved Open Meetings and Open Records trainers by the Iowa Public Information Board, provided four training sessions in January and February. These in-person sessions provided 40 local officials with the required training outlined in House File 706, which was enacted by the State of Iowa. This law requires newly elected and appointed officials taking office after July 1, 2025 to participate in a minimum of one hour of training regarding open meetings and open records law.

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.

COG staff is scheduling additional training sessions to be held in Crawford and Sac County in the coming weeks. Additional training sessions are planned to be held quarterly. If a city or county has a group of officials that are interested in the training, please contact Chris Whitaker, Local Assistance Director at cwhitaker@region12cog.org or via phone at 712-775-7811 to schedule a special training session. Information on additional sessions can be found at www.region12cog.org/webinarspodcasts/ or on the Region XII COG Facebook page.

March

- 11 - **RDC Loan Review Comm.**
11:30 AM, COG Training Room
- 18 - **Mid Iowa Dev. Fund**
3:00 PM, Virtual
- 19 - **Executive Board Meeting**
12:30 PM, COG Training Room

April

- 3 - Good Friday;
Office Closed
- 8 - **RPA TAC**
10:00 AM, COG Board Room
RDC Loan Review Comm.
11:30 AM, COG Training Room
- 9 - **Executive Board Meeting**
5:00 PM, COG Training Room
Policy Council
6:00 PM, COG Training Room

May

- 7 - **Executive Board Meeting**
12:30 PM, COG Training Room
- 9 - **RDC Loan Review Comm.**
11:30 AM, COG Training Room
- 25 - Memorial Day;
Office Closed

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



Chris Whitaker, Local Assistance Director, provides Open Meetings Open Records Training in Jefferson to local elected officials.

Nuisance Abatement Program Update

Over the past several months, Region XII has partnered with several cities including Glidden, Templeton, Lake City, and Schleswig to carry out nuisance abatement efforts aimed at improving neighborhood conditions, cleaning up properties, and ultimately creating a more vibrant and welcoming community.

We are glad to see that these collaborative and proactive approaches have produced strong results, which have led to improved compliance among property owners and cleaner cities within our region. We remain committed to supporting our communities and continuing this work in the years ahead and would love to work with your city moving forward. For more information about how to have Region XII implement nuisance abatement in your community, contact Chris Whitaker at cwhitaker@region12cog.org or 712-775-7811.



Western Iowa Transit Software Change

Western Iowa Transit has transitioned to a new software platform for the first time in 5 years effective February 4th. The new driver application is called ParaScope by TripMaster which replaces the previous application ParaPlan. ParaPlan will no longer be supported after March 2026 which prompted the change in software. WIT is excited about this software upgrade to help improve our services.

Western Iowa Transit Quarter 2 Stats

24,965 rides
216,054 miles traveled

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 31, 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, LLP, Carroll
Central Iowa Surveying, Jefferson
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
Jefferson Telecom, Jefferson
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 Corporation, Audubon
Audubon County Memorial Hospital, Audubon
Audubon State Bank, Audubon
Badding Construction, Carroll
Carroll Athletic Association, Carroll
Carroll County Growth Partnership, Carroll
Community State Bank, Paton
Coon Rapids Municipal Utilities, Coon Rapids
Core-Mark Midcontinent, Carroll
Corn Belt Telephone, Wall Lake
Crawford County Memorial Hospital, Denison
Denison Municipal Utilities, 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
Game One, Carroll
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

CDBG Program Update

Funding Program	Purpose	Deadline	Eligible Applicants
CDBG Water, Sewer, and Stormwater Fund	Grants to assist cities and counties with sanitary sewer system improvements, water system improvements, water and wastewater treatment facilities, storm sewer projects related to sanitary sewer system improvements, rural water connections, and stormwater conveyances to mitigate flood risks.	May 1, 2026 September 1, 2026	Cities and Counties
CDBG Community Facilities Fund	This annual competitive program offers grants to assist communities for a variety of projects including day care facilities, senior centers, vocational workshops and other community service facilities.	May 1, 2026 September 1, 2026	Cities and Counties
CDBG Pocket Parks	This competitive program assists communities with developing green spaces (less than 1/4 acres) intended for recreational use accessible to handicapped individuals.	May 1, 2026 September 1, 2026	Cities and Counties
CDBG Streetscapes	This initiative offers the opportunity to enhance sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, wayfinding, and other public-realm features that strengthen commercial corridors and promote long-term economic vitality.	May 1, 2026	Cities that have completed a DTR/ Commercial Façade Grant with 5 years
CDBG Roof Replacement Program	The program will assist in providing aid to low-moderate income single-family homeowners to replace roofing.	May 1, 2026	Cities
CDBG Planning Grants	The program provides targeted funding to help communities engage qualified consultants to complete planning efforts that position future CDBG investments, specifically historic district surveys, asset management plans, and capital improvement plans.	May 1, 2026	Cities and Counties
CDBG Homeless Providers Program	The program supports services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Funding is available for new or expanded eligible operating activities, including staffing, utilities and necessary program supplies. The program does not fund construction or rehabilitation activities	May 1, 2026	Cities and Counties
CDBG Food Pantries Program	The program supports new or expanded food pantry operations serving low- and moderate-income communities.	May 1, 2026	Cities and Counties
CDBG Upper Story Housing Program	Maximum grant amount is \$250,000.00 and applicants must have successfully completed a Commercial Facades project to be eligible.	September 1, 2026	Cities
CDBG Commercial Facades	This program assists communities with impactful downtown exterior improvement projects that eliminate slum and blight conditions. Project buildings must be located within a downtown target area.	September 1, 2026	Cities

Need Home Repairs? Join the Region XII COG Wait List!

Are you or do you know someone that is over the age of 62, a veteran, or living with a disability and having trouble keeping up with home repairs? Region XII Council of Governments offers assistance with essential home repairs throughout the COG service region and member cities. To be added to the wait list for assistance with home repairs:

Apply Today:

<https://region12cog.org/waiting-list-application/> OR contact the Region XII COG office at 712-792-9914.

February 2026 Grant Update

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Upcoming Grants

Funding Program	Purpose	Deadline	Eligible Applicants
AARP Community Challenge Grant	Grants to support permanent physical improvements in the community, temporary demonstrations that lead to long-term change, and new, innovative programming pilots or services.	March 4, 2026	Community-based nonprofit organizations and local governments are eligible to apply
Land and Water Conservation Fund (Iowa DNR)	Conservation and recreation projects and land acquisition	March 6, 2026	Local governments
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 club
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
Iowa West Foundation	Grants focused on four core outcomes: Belonging, Financial Stability, Opportunity and Well-Being. Grants can be provided in one of four categories: Program Grants, Operating Grants, Capital Grants, and Launch Grants. In addition to the four grants described, the Iowa West Foundation funds initiatives, capacity building, contingency support and emergency funding to existing grantees and partners	May 15, 2026 September 15, 2026 January 15, 2027	Local governments and non-profit organizations in Audubon, Carroll and Crawford Counties.
Alliant Hometown Challenge Grants	Projects which fall within the hunger and housing, workforce readiness, environmental stewardship, and community safety and engagement programs.	May 15, 2026 September 15, 2026 January 15, 2027	Organizations within the communities Alliant Energy serves
State Recreation Trails Fund (Iowa DOT)	Acquisition, construction or improvement of recreational trails	July 1, 2026	Local governments, non-profit organizations
Warren H. Timmerman Charitable Trust	Funding for projects in Carroll County	July 1, 2026	Local governments, non-profit organizations in Carroll County
Gilbert and Barbara Renze Charitable Foundation	Funding for projects Carroll and Sac Counties	July 1, 2026	Local governments, non-profit organizations in Carroll and Sac Counties
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
CDBG Community Facilities	Greene County	\$600,000	New Paton-Churdan Early Learning Facility
FHLB Affordable Housing Program	Region XII COG	\$622,170	Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation in Audubon, Carroll, Crawford, Greene, Sac and Member Cities
USDA Community Facilities	City of Ricketts	\$900,000	Wastewater System Improvements
CDBG Opportunities and Threats Fund	City of Denison	\$1,360,000	Acquisition Rehab and Down Payment Assistance of 4 Owner-occupied Houses

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.

Region XII Acquisition Rehabilitation Project

Region XII has partnered with the City of Jefferson on an acquisition with rehabilitation project. The city received the house thru 657A process, and the property was then sold to Region XII for \$100. The city has also provided \$25,000 in funds and removed two large ash trees as part of a city incentive program. Upon completion, the house will undergo an entire gut/rehab creating a 2-bedroom, 1 bathroom home with all new components. The house will be sold to a first-time homebuyer who is at or below 80% AMI. This type of rehabilitation project closely follows the recommendations from the city's Rural Housing Readiness program through Iowa State University Extension by providing a much needed quality housing unit.

If your city has a similar property and would like to know more about this program, please contact Karla Janning at kjanning@region12cog.org or 712-775-7825.



Before

After

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

- Chris Whitaker, Local Assistance Director cwhitaker@region12cog.org
- Lauren Mortensen, Economic Development Planner..... lmortensen@region12cog.org
- Shannan Potts, Regional Planner..... spotts@region12cog.org
- Connor Womacks, Regional Planner..... cwomacks@region12cog.org
- Shelly Codner, Iowa Waste Exchange Program Manager scodner@region12cog.org
- Paige Alesch, Iowa Waste Exchange Specialist..... palesch@region12cog.org
- Steve Kohtz, Iowa Waste Exchange Outreach Specialist..... skohtz@region12cog.org
- Karla Janning, Housing Programs Coordinator..... kjanning@region12cog.org
- 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
- Mike Rath, Service Manager..... mrath@region12cog.org
- Jill Anthofer, Transit Assistant..... janthofer@region12cog.org
- Chris Brown, Office Assistant..... cbrown@region12cog.org

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