

FISCAL YEAR 2025

Annual Report



INRCOG

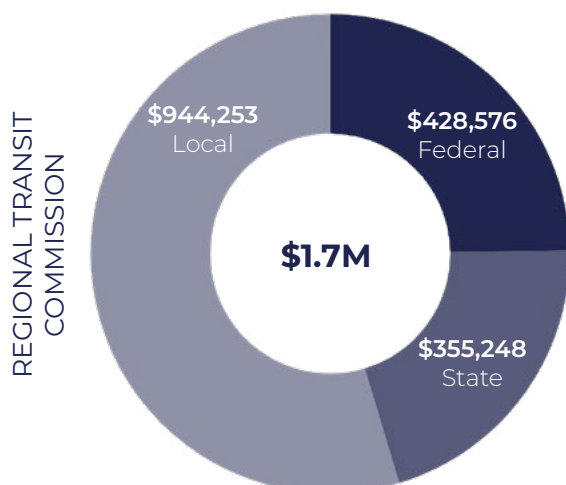
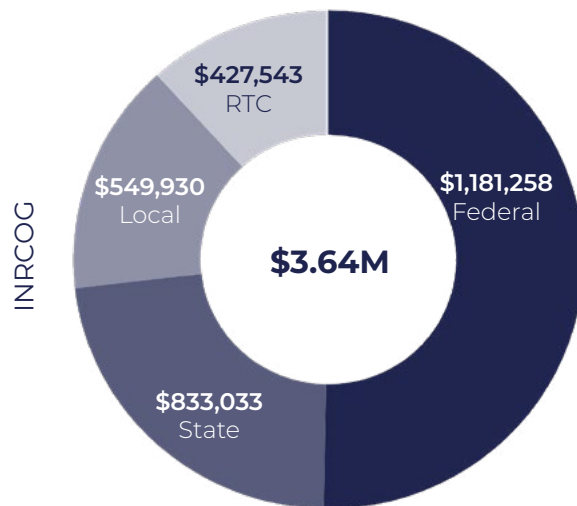
Iowa Northland Regional
Council of Governments

PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS

Developing Strong Local Government
Through Regional Cooperation



FY 2025 INCOME



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thank you for being a member of INRCOG or for partnering with us to enhance the quality of life across our region.

Fiscal Year 2025 brought challenges for local governments in Iowa and in our region. Not unlike the famous opening of Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, "it was the best of times; it was the worst of times", things seemed to feel like they were rising and falling like a rollercoaster. Fortunately, as we step back the long view will tell us it was the "best of times".

Our region had its share of economic and employment setbacks but also offsetting positives. Construction and project development continued, and local improvements driven by our member governments were started and completed by you and your staff members working in tandem with our staff.

Our hard-working professional staff is dedicated to making things better for all of us living in the region and it is certainly worth acknowledging and celebrating that they were recognized this past year for specific transportation projects and transit management, planning proficiency, and leadership skills. As a regional planning organization in Iowa, I believe we can all be proud of who works for INRCOG.

We reiterate our appreciation to you and your communities for showing faith in our organization. Your contributions to the agency are not taken lightly and, as always, we are here for you. We always invite and welcome your involvement in our organization through the many boards, commissions, and committees that make INRCOG a successful organization. Together we will continue building a vibrant future for our communities!

The Cedar Falls Housing Trust Fund was certified as Iowa's newest Local Housing Trust Fund, making it eligible for state funding to support affordable housing initiatives. INRCOG helped establish the nonprofit and will provide administrative support for programs like emergency home repairs, down payment assistance, and transitional housing.

INRCOG contributed to the design of the City of Waterloo's Park Avenue pedestrian and bicycle corridor to advance safety and accessibility for its users. Bicycle signals, funded by the Black Hawk County MPO, and green buffered bike lanes were installed to enhance user visibility and safety, aligning with the City's goals for enhancing transportation infrastructure and promoting safe, accessible streets for all users.

The Black Hawk County MPO and the Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority adopted their respective Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) for FY 2025-2028. The TIPs include all projects programmed for federal transportation funding over the next four fiscal years.

INRCOG's long-term recreational trail planning efforts were highlighted through Panthers on Parade, a Cedar Falls Tourism and Visitors Bureau community project that featured the University of Northern Iowa's TC mascot. Artist Mary Ingamells created "Trails TC" as a way to promote that the area's paved and water trails are one of the Cedar Valley's best amenities.

A transportation survey was launched to gather crucial input from residents to help identify transportation needs and priorities for the next 25 years. Results will be beneficial to staff as they update the Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority's (INRTA) Long-Range Transportation Plan. The Plan, slated for adoption in FY'26, helps ensure the region's transportation system evolves to meet community demands.

Following the receipt of funding through the Iowa Healthiest State Initiative's 5-2-1-0 program, the City of Nashua, with guidance from INRCOG, developed a Community Action Plan that identified projects to meet the needs and wishes of its residents while also aligning with the goals of 5-2-1-0 Healthy Choices Count! The Plan and its included projects, approved by Iowa Health and Human Services, is designed to enhance physical activity, promote wellness education, and strengthen community connections.

A ribbon cutting ceremony celebrated the paving completion of the 52-mile long Cedar Valley Nature Trail that runs from Black Hawk County to Linn County. The hard surfacing of the final 16-mile unpaved section of the trail was completed in part thanks to a successful Destination Iowa grant application written by INRCOG for Black Hawk County Conservation and Linn County Conservation.

In partnership with Veridian Credit Union, INRCOG completed a housing rehabilitation initiative funded by a Federal Home Loan Bank grant. Within the INRCOG region, \$190,000 assisted 12 homes with improvements to enhance safety, accessibility, and overall livability. Focus was on households with incomes below 80 percent of the area median income (AMI) with special attention to those below 60 percent of AMI.

INRCOG collaborated with community members, local leaders, and stakeholders to assist the City of Sumner with updating their Comprehensive Plan. The adopted Plan outlines actionable strategies to ensure a thriving, sustainable community for years to come.

For the 8th year, INRCOG assisted the City of Cedar Falls with administration of their CDBG and HOME Programs.

Through a collaborative process involving local officials, emergency management teams, and community stakeholders, INRCOG is assisting with the development of the Butler County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan that provides a strategic framework for reducing risks and enhancing community resilience to natural and man-made hazards.

The Chickasaw County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan received approval from FEMA. With guidance from INRCOG, the County's Plan outlines actionable steps to protect lives, property, and the local economy and makes the County and its jurisdictions eligible for federal funding opportunities to implement hazard mitigation projects identified in the plan.

Developed with assistance from INRCOG, the City of La Porte City's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Low-and-Moderate Income Set-Aside Administrative Plan was completed. The Plan outlines how the City will use state-mandated TIF set-aside funds to assist low- and moderate-income households with essential home repairs such as roofing, heating, accessibility, and plumbing.

INRCOG staff oversaw the completion of a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan for the City of Waterloo which outlines key solutions and improves safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists in the community's downtown area. Safe Streets for All, a part of the DOT's National Roadway Safety Strategy, provided funding for this important Plan.

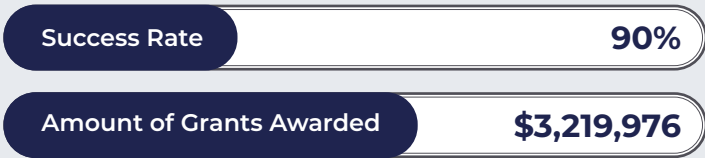
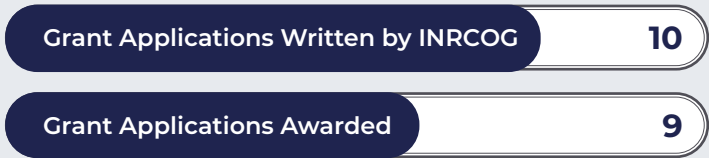
The City of Allison completed improvements to its wastewater treatment system, ensuring environmental compliance and enhancing service for its residents. Community Development Block Grant funds from the Iowa Economic Development Authority helped make this project possible and allows the City to reduce the financial burden on local ratepayers by limiting sewer rate increases and ensuring affordability for residents. The upgraded facility provides Allison with capacity through 2040 and helps preserve public health and environmental quality in Butler County.

The City of New Hampton contracted with INRCOG to develop a Housing Needs Assessment. In cooperation with a local Housing Task Force, the assessment will evaluate current housing conditions, identify current and future housing needs, and recommend strategies to support a diverse, affordable, and resilient housing stock.

INRCOG hosts the Iowa DNR funded Waste Exchange Program Area 3 Representative covering a 28-county area, including the INRCOG region. Within Area 3, 836 contacts resulted in 20 matches that kept over 5,000 tons of material from entering the landfill, resulting in \$272,926 in diversion cost savings and \$21,000 in additional savings.

Through its Safe Routes to School Partnership, INRCOG worked with 30 community organizations to deliver 25 safety and bike skill sessions to 3,812 youth with the help of 540 teachers, partners, and volunteers. Efforts expanded to 34 Walk & Roll to School Day events and 4 ongoing walking and biking school buses, while 235 bike helmets were given to youth in need. Staff also assisted six communities with policy, system, or environmental changes to improve walkability to ensure safe, active travel for students across our region.

GRANT AWARDS FY 2025



The State Housing Trust Fund gave awards to three local housing trust funds that are administered by INRCOG. The **Waterloo Housing Trust Fund** was awarded \$265,628; the **Iowa Northland Regional Housing Council** received \$479,690; and the newly established **Cedar Falls Housing Trust Fund** received \$212,426. Each of the awards will be matched with local funds to address housing challenges, preserve housing stock, and expand opportunities for households in need in the two communities and throughout the region.

The Iowa Department of Transportation approved **Transportation Alternatives Program** funding to continue the Safe Routes to School Partnership for Fiscal Year 2025. INRCOG received \$283,482 to continue its collaboration with Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission and the Iowa Bicycle Coalition to enhance the safety and accessibility of bicycle and pedestrian transportation for youth through education and outreach and by creating safer routes for students.

The City of Lawler secured a \$304,750 **Community Development Block Grant** from the Iowa Economic Authority to support the construction of a new well to ensure a safe and reliable water supply for the community. INRCOG is administering the grant and is proud to support Lawler and all our member communities with accessing funding for essential infrastructure improvements.

A **Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines** home repair program was completed after 12 homes were assisted with needed repairs. The **Iowa Finance Authority's Housing Assistance Fund** provided funding for the rehabilitation of 21 additional homes in the INRCOG region. In FY'25, IFA awarded additional Housing Assistance Funds totaling \$385,000 to extend housing rehabilitation to qualified homeowners in the region. Staff administers these programs by working closely with homeowners, contractors, and the funding sources to improve the quality and safety of these homes.

INRCOG staff prepared and submitted a successful **Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP)** grant application on behalf of the City of Denver for enhancements to Brandt Park. The \$75,000 award will be used to improve the park through several park upgrades.

The City of Aplington received **Community Project Funding** totaling \$1,000,000 for a Protective Services Building. Combined with a local match of \$700,000, the funding will be used to construct a modern space to accommodate new equipment and create a safer environment for first responders and volunteers. This critical project will improve public safety and emergency response in the community and nearby areas by making operations more efficient and improving communication and coordination during emergencies.

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMISSION

In its commitment to provide safe, accessible, and reliable open-to-the-public transit service, INRTC staff implemented TripMaster software to modernize and streamline scheduling and dispatch. The software also allows for enhanced reporting and data collection, improved efficiencies, and better experiences for riders of OnBoard Public Transit.

At the Iowa Public Transit Association's (IPTA) Annual Meeting, OnBoard Public Transit Driver Todd Scott was recognized with a Professional Driver Award and INRCOG's Administrative Assistant Hayley Weiglein was recognized as IPTA's Dispatcher of the Year.

FY'25 Service Statistics



INRCOG | PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS

The Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments is an association of local governments that is committed to identifying, securing, and coordinating local, regional, and federal government projects and programs for the enhancement of our region and member communities.

Services Offered:

- Community Development
- Community Planning
- Data Services
- Emergency Preparedness
- Environment
- Housing
- Recreation
- Safe Routes to School
- Transportation
- OnBoard Public Transit

INRCOG STAFF

BRIAN SCHOON, Executive Director
ISAIAH CORBIN, Director of Development
NICK FRATZKE, Director of Transportation
SHERI ALLDREDGE, Director of Administrative Services
SYDNEY EISELT, Environmental Resource Specialist
CINDY KNOX, Housing Planner
OGHOGHO ORIAKHI, Transportation Planner
BRENDON PONTO, Accountant
VINCENT RUGGIERE, Community Planner
DAN SCHLICHTMANN, Data Services Coordinator
LINDA SIREN, Transit Operations Manager
SANZIDA RAHMAN SETU, Transportation Planner
BRENDA VAVROCH, Safe Routes to School Coordinator
HAYLEY WEIGLEIN, Administrative Assistant

OnBoard Public Transit DRIVERS

RYAN AMBROSE
JOHN CREW
ALAN DEBEER
KEN DEPUEW
LEA EVERLY
KARLA FRAZIER
STEVE GOEBEL
GEORGE LAURIE
ANDREW MEANY
SAM NISSEN
JASON PROFFITT
TODD SCOTT
ROGER WILSON

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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LINDA LAYLIN, Vice-Chair; Black Hawk County Supervisor
MARK SCHILDROTH, Secretary; Grundy County Supervisor
DANNY LAUDICK, Treasurer; Mayor of Cedar Falls

AT-LARGE MEMBERS

GREG BARNETT, Butler County Supervisor
STEVE GEERTS, Mayor of New Hampton
QUENTIN HART, Mayor of Waterloo
LISA SMOCK, Mayor of Elk Run Heights
KEITH WIELAND, Buchanan County Supervisor

BOARD & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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LISA SMOCK, Mayor of Elk Run Heights
Iowa Northland Regional Economic Development Comm.
TAMMY ROBINSON, City of New Hampton
Iowa Northland Regional Housing Council
BRENDA SCHMIDTKE, Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity
Iowa Northland Regional Transit Commission
DUANE HILDEBRANDT, Bremer County Supervisor
Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority
GREG BARNETT, Butler County Supervisor



INRCOG
Iowa Northland Regional
Council of Governments

*Serving the counties of Black Hawk, Bremer,
Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, and Grundy.*

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