

Celebrating **50** Years 1973-2023



INRCOG

Iowa Northland Regional
Council of Governments

FISCAL YEAR 2023

Annual Report

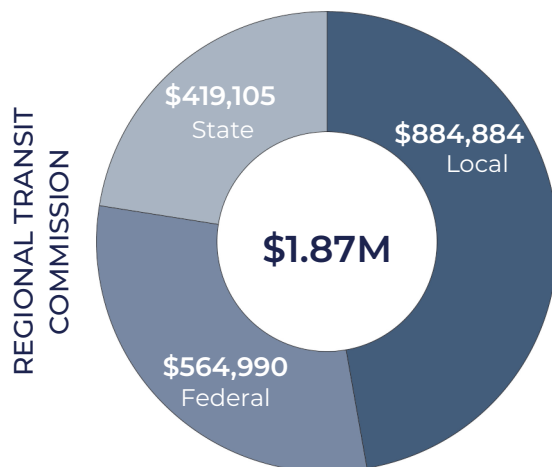
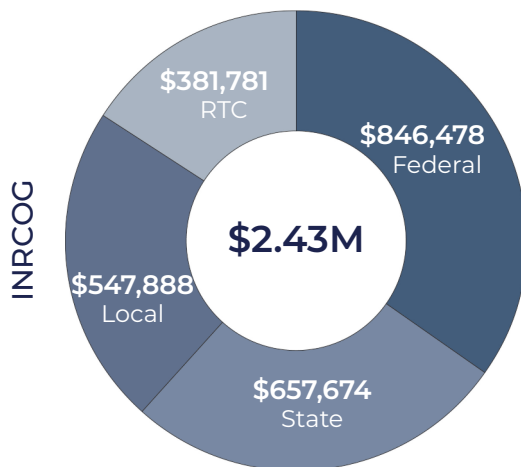
PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS

Developing Strong Local Government
Through Regional Cooperation



Cedar River Water Trail Designation

FY 2023 INCOME



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

While it's hard to believe another year has passed, this year marked a milestone for the agency. INRCOG recognized its 50th anniversary of providing services to our six-county area. From originally offering services from the basement of Waterloo City Hall, to renting space in three different locations, to owning the building where we are currently located, we can all be proud of the projects we have partnered on with you. Along the way, we have worked with so many terrific local governments, state and federal agencies, and organizations to make them reality. All with the single focus of making our region a better place for everyone.

Fiscal Year 2023 was no exception to our long history of being a local government resource for member communities. As you see in this report, we have been involved in a commendable number of projects. Specifically, our agency played a role in a diverse array of projects, utilizing our skills even beyond our well-known and respected planning roots. And while we have not lost sight of the services we have provided since our inception, this year saw us working on water trail plans and designations, placemaking planning and development, solid waste planning, trail project grantwriting, transportation corridor planning and safety projects, broadband service applications, stormwater management projects and project development, housing assistance and neighborhood revitalization efforts. INRCOG is proud to offer regional transit services and waste exchange services on your behalf, as well. We continued to offer our traditional services including leading outstanding transportation, housing, land use, urban renewal and revitalization planning, and hazard mitigation planning services for our members.

Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your quality-of-life improvement projects for the past 50 years. With your support, we look forward to the next 50 years.

The Cedar River and Black Hawk Creek in Black Hawk County were officially designated as **State Water Trails**. A ribbon cutting ceremony at the river access in Washington Park in Cedar Falls preceded a six-mile paddle by canoers and kayakers to the Waterloo Boat House for presentations by key figures involved in the process. Designation as a state water trail elevates the status of the river for recreation, makes the river eligible for future improvements funding, and provides important links with stream and watershed restoration efforts in other areas of the state. The Black Hawk County Water Trails Master Plan was a coordinated partnership between INRCOG, Iowa Department of Natural Resources River Programs, Black Hawk County Conservation, local stakeholders, landowners, residents, and the cities of Janesville, Cedar Falls, Waterloo, Evansdale, Hudson, Gilbertville, and La Porte City.

INRCOG, Grow Cedar Valley, and Deere Corporation partnered with Vandewalle & Associates to create the “Cedar River Experience Vision” a **placemaking master plan**. With a focus on the Cedar River, the proposed plan will support hospitality, cultural, and retail economic bases and help attract and retain workforce in the Cedar Valley by increasing density of destinations, underscoring recreational opportunities, and creating environmentally sustainable development along the river.

The Black Hawk County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) adopted the **2022 Public Participation Plan** which describes proactive strategies, techniques, and desired outcomes to inform and engage community members in the transportation planning and decision-making process.

The Black Hawk County MPO and the Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority adopted their respective FY 2023-2026 **Transportation Improvement Programs** which identify transportation projects including highway and street improvements, trails, and transit, scheduled to receive federal funding in the INRCOG Region.

With the help of the Des Moines Area MPO's Iowa Data Bike equipped with cameras and smartphones, staff collected **trail pavement conditions data** and 360° imagery over 97 miles of the Cedar Valley Trail network as part of a multi-year effort to collect trail pavement data.

INRCOG worked with area solid waste commissions, Boards of Supervisors, City Clerks, and Public Works staff in Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, and Fayette counties and the cities of Dike, Grundy Center, Morrison, Reinbeck, and Stout in Grundy County to complete the **Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan, 8th Revision**.

INRCOG updated the **Cedar Valley Trails & Recreation Guide** with a new color scheme, added Bird Watching Spots, new sponsors, and QR codes to link to the Interactive Cedar Valley Trails Map and Cedar Valley Water Trails websites.

Our **Iowa Waste Exchange** representative for Area 3 (consisting of the INRCOG region and 22 additional counties) assisted 1,055 customers/agencies and made 65 matches, diverting 395 tons of materials from the landfill. The Iowa Waste Exchange is one of the nation's premier materials exchange programs.

INRCOG joined with Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity to place a **Homes for Iowa** home in the Heartland Hills subdivision in rural Bremer County. INRCOG helped secure financing for the project through the Iowa Northland Regional Housing Council's Housing Trust Fund to construct the home's foundation.

The City of Waterloo contracted with INRCOG to administer Economic Development Administration funding awarded by the **American Rescue Plan Act** program for the installation of a fiber backbone to facilitate a community-wide fiber optics communication system.

Staff is assisting the City of Cedar Falls with administration of **American Rescue Plan** funds awarded through the Economic Development Administration for improvements along the Cedar River to support local tourism and outdoor recreational/whitewater improvements.

After assisting with the application process, INRCOG is helping the City of Sumner with implementation of a **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program** award for Phase II of its flood mitigation project.

INRCOG contracted with the City of Allison for administration of their **CDBG Program**. Funding for sewer improvements will allow the community to comply with required water quality standards.

Safe Routes to Schools continued to encourage safe walking and biking; 3,545 students were reached through 20 Bike Skills Sessions, 13 Classroom Sessions, 9 Community Booths, and 4 Schoolwide Walk, Bike & Roll Days. 541 Adult “Roll” Models supported these efforts and 246 helmets were given out.

INRCOG is assisting the City of Sumner and Butler County with updates to their respective **Comprehensive Plans**.

INRCOG continued to assist the City of Cedar Falls with administration of their **CDBG and HOME Programs**.

INRCOG completed applications for ten city and county members in response to an Invitation to Qualify for **Broadband Intervention Zones**. The applying communities proposed areas to be prioritized in funding decisions under the Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant project. All ten applications ranked in the top 20 of the 99 applications submitted statewide and will further increase our region's ability to improve broadband connectivity.



GRANT AWARDS

FY 2023

Grant Applications written by INRCOG **20**

Grant Applications Awarded **15**

Success Rate **75%**

The Iowa Economic Development Authority, through **Destination Iowa**, awarded \$3.5M jointly to Black Hawk County Conservation and Linn County Conservation to pave 16 miles of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail that connects the Waterloo/Cedar Falls and Cedar Rapids metropolitan areas.

The City of Sumner was awarded **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program** funding in response to severe storms in 2020. The \$3,516,964 award will support Phase II of the City's flood mitigation project.

The Iowa DNR's Natural Resource Commission made **Resource Enhancement and Protection** awards to three cities.

Wellsburg received \$50,000 for Phase 1 of a multi-phased project at City Park; New Hampton was awarded \$75,000 for the last phase of the TRIBE Trail; and Waterloo received \$193,890 to complete the second phase of enhancements at Greenbelt Lake.

Grundy County received \$40,000 from the **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program** to complete an update to its Hazard Mitigation Plan. INRCOG is assisting the county with this update along with stakeholders who will develop long-term solutions to reduce the impact of disasters.

The City of Evansdale was awarded \$262,320 from the Iowa DNR **Water Trails Enhancement Grant** program for the construction of a new concrete boat ramp, parking lot, and access road along the Cedar River.

The Waterloo Housing Trust Fund was awarded \$243,203 and the Iowa Northland Regional Housing Council received \$439,207 from the **State Housing Trust Fund** for CY 2023-2024 to benefit low- to moderate-income households. The funds will be administered by INRCOG.

A Community Development Block Grant **Neighborhood Revitalization Planning Grant** totaling \$25,000 was awarded to the City of La Porte City. INRCOG is preparing a Neighborhood Revitalization Plan to include improvements in a target area near the downtown and the Cedar Valley Nature Trail.

INRCOG partnered with the City of Gilbertville to successfully request \$500,000 through the **Community Project Funding** program. Staff will help with administration of the funds that are being used to construct a new Emergency Services Facility.

INRCOG partnered with Veridian Credit Union to successfully apply for \$221,760 from the **Federal Home Loan Bank** to rehabilitate 12 single-family owner-occupied home in the INRCOG region.

Community Development Block Grants, through the Iowa Economic Development Authority, were awarded to Ionia and Frederika for rehabilitation and improvements to their wastewater treatment plants. Ionia received \$226,000; Frederika received \$300,000. INRCOG is working with the communities to administer these grant awards

A **Safe Streets and Roads for All** grant application submitted by INRCOG was awarded for the Black Hawk County metropolitan area. The \$48,000 award will be used to develop a comprehensive Safety Action Plan to enhance roadway safety in the metro area.

The **Economic Development Administration** awarded \$210,000 to the Iowa Northland Regional Economic Development Commission to support implementation of the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

The Enhance Iowa Board announced a \$100,000 **Community Attraction and Tourism** award for the City of New Hampton to complete the last phase of the TRIBE Trail.

The City of Cedar Falls was awarded a \$259,415 **Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities** grant for drainage studies in four areas of the City to guide future flood prevention projects. INRCOG assisted with the application process and will administer the grant.

Thanks to a \$609 grant from the **Cedar Valley Trails Partnership**, QR Codes were installed on Wayfinding signs on the Waterloo-Cedar Falls trail network to give trail users the ability to easily connect to the Interactive Cedar Valley Trails map.

INRCOG partnered with Buchanan County Economic Development Commission on a successful **USDA Rural Business Development Grant** application for \$8,575 to update the County's Housing Needs Assessment.

INRCOG was awarded \$412,494 from the **Iowa Homeowner Assistance Fund** and will work with the Iowa Finance Authority to assist up to 12 homeowners with repairs.

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMISSION

FY'23 Direct Service Statistics



32,762
Rides



493,278
Miles



14,023
Hours



onboardpublictransit.com

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
LEON BEGAY, Community Planner
ALDINA DAUTOVIĆ, Transportation Planner
KYLE DURANT, Transportation Planner
CINDY KNOX, Housing Planner
ROSE PHILLIPS, Housing Planner
BRENDA PONTO, Accountant
DAN SCHLICHTMANN, Data Services Coordinator
LINDA SIRES, Transit Operations Manager
TAMMY TURNER, Environmental Resource Specialist
BRENDA VAVROCH, Safe Routes to School Coordinator
HAYLEY WEIGLEIN, Administrative Assistant

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DUANE HILDEBRANDT, Chair; Bremer County Supervisor
LINDA LAYLIN, Vice-Chair, Black Hawk County Supervisor
MARK SCHILDROTH, Secretary; Grundy County Supervisor
MATT KUHN, Treasurer; Chickasaw County Supervisor

AT-LARGE MEMBERS

ROB GREEN, Mayor of Cedar Falls
QUENTIN HART, Mayor of Waterloo
CLAYTON OHRT, Buchanan County Supervisor
LISA SMOCK, Mayor of Elk Run Heights
LARRY YOUNG, Mayor of Shell Rock

ONBOARD PUBLIC TRANSIT DRIVERS

JOHN CREW
ALAN DEBEER
KEN DEPUEW
KARLA FRAZIER
STEVE GOEBEL
MARY KARR
ANDREW MEANY
BEVERLY HENDERSON
SAM NISSEN
JASON PROFFITT
MIKE SATTERLEE
TODD SCOTT
AMY STEARNS
ROGER WILSON

BOARD & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Black Hawk Co. Metropolitan Area Transportation Policy Board
DEANNE KOBLISKA, Mayor of Evansdale
Iowa Northland Regional Economic Development Commission
BILL WERGER, Waverly Economic Development
Iowa Northland Regional Housing Council
KEN KAMMEYER, Bremer County Board of Supervisors
Iowa Northland Regional Transit Commission
DUANE HILDEBRANDT, Bremer County Board of Supervisors
Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority
GREG BARNETT, Butler County Board of Supervisors



INRCOG
Iowa Northland Regional
Council of Governments

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

229 E Park Avenue | Waterloo IA

P (319) 235-0311 | F (319) 235-2891 | www.inrcog.org

