



Common Questions Regarding the Housing Rehabilitation Program

How was the program funded?

The City applied for the grant and was awarded the funds by the State of Iowa's Department of Economic Development. The purpose of this program is to bring homes like yours up to Iowa's Minimum Housing Rehabilitation Standards. This includes making your home safe, decent, sanitary, and energy efficient.

What are the rules?

In general, you must own or be buying your home, you must have and maintain homeowner's insurance, you must not live in the 100-year flood plain, and you must meet certain income guidelines. Based on what county you live in, you must have a total household income below 80% of the median income of the county. Cities may adopt additional guidelines.

Who is INRCOG?

The City hired the Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCOG) to administer the housing rehabilitation program on their behalf. INRCOG is located in Waterloo and provides technical assistance in many areas in a six county region. The Housing Department will be working with you and the City.

What kinds of things can you do to my home?

We have two inspectors that conduct inspections on the homes. They will look for any visible problems at your house and ask you if you know of any additional problems. After the inspection is completed, work specifications are written in accordance with a Rehabilitation Specification Manual and presented to you, so that you know what will be done. Common tasks include updating your electrical system, installing vinyl siding, installing vinyl replacement windows, furnace replacement, and roofing.

How much does it cost?

Although this is a grant-funded program, homeowners will be given the grant in the form of a five-year forgivable loan from the City. Some homeowners have been required to contribute financially when the construction costs total more than \$25,000. If you do not have to contribute toward the rehabilitation and you reside in your home as your primary residence for the five-year period after your project is completed, then the loan amount for the cost of your project is completely forgiven, and you would not be required to pay for the project. If you have to move during the five year period, you will be required to pay a pro-rated portion of the project total back to the City.

As mentioned above, some homeowners have to contribute toward the project, if the construction proposals exceed program funding. Homeowners will be given the opportunity to voluntarily withdraw from the program prior to construction beginning, if they are unwilling or unable to contribute to the program.

Who does the work on my house?

The work specifications that the inspectors write are sent out to many area contractors, as well as several state-wide clearinghouses. The specifications will be in a form that allows for the contractors to write in dollar amounts for each of the items in your project, called a bid. The contractors are allowed to visit the project site in order to better estimate the work involved in the project. The contractors submit the bids to the City, and the contractor with the lowest responsible bid is awarded the project.

You may have other questions, such as: How long will the project take? What happens if I don't like something that is done? Who makes sure the work is done correctly? What happens if something breaks?

Most of these questions are addressed in the contract that will govern the project, and we will be happy to address your concerns on the phone or in person. Please contact INRCOG at 319-235-0311 if you have any further questions.