



2026 IOWA THRIVING COMMUNITIES SCORING MATRIX

Iowa Thriving Community applications will be scored on the six categories below.

IMPORTANT: Applications that do not include satisfactory responses and supporting documentation for the required elements in each category will not be scored.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

MAXIMUM POINTS 15 POINTS

REQUIRED

- Financial commitment from community

ADDITIONAL SCORING CONSIDERATIONS | DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

- Waived Fees or In-Kind Contributions
- TIF and/or Tax abatement
- Active use or willingness to use any TIF LMI set-aside funds held by the city to provide LMI housing assistance
- Local financial support
- Land, including from private sector land owners
- Nuisance property abatement process
- Property acquisition through voluntary assignment of tax sale certificate or purchase at tax sale
- Recognition by adopted resolution of the Local Housing Trust Fund (LHTF) serving the community, including documentation of any Local Match financial contributions the city has made to the LHTF
- Other

NARRATIVE

IFA | IEDA are seeking communities that are using their resources to strategically invest in housing in their communities. This category is intentionally broad to allow for creative and innovative solutions to how communities are leveraging funds.

PLANNING & ASSESSMENT

MAXIMUM POINTS 20 POINTS

REQUIRED

- Evidence of purposeful planning and assessment to address the community's housing needs

ADDITIONAL SCORING CONSIDERATIONS | DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

- Comprehensive Plan that addresses the need for affordable housing that is no more than 5 years old (includes housing element, addresses current needs in the community and evidence of city following plan)
- Rural Housing Readiness Assessment – Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
- Housing Needs Assessment – Completed within the past 5 years

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- Innovations in Zoning
 - The relevant local government unit must have made changes to applicable zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, or other land development regulations to increase development density, expediate approval, reduce impact fees, or reduce parking, building or development costs.
- Housing Steering Committee with current and actionable strategic housing goals
- Rental housing registration and property inspection programs
- Locally adopted Building codes (building code, electrical code, mechanical code, and plumbing code) and performs inspections pursuant to such codes
- Other

NARRATIVE

IFA | IEDA are seeking communities that have current plans and processes that encourage and facilitate the construction and renovation of affordable and workforce housing. This category provides an opportunity for communities to describe their implementation successes and challenges.

TARGETED LOCATION(S)

(OR SITE, IF APPLICABLE)

MAXIMUM POINTS

10 POINTS

Urban Communities (those not meeting the definition of “rural”) must select a specific target neighborhood or site eligible for WHTC or LIHTC incentives points.

REQUIRED | DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

- Type of project or needed target market
- Neighborhood or site(s) selected
- Infrastructure – in place or plan complete

ADDITIONAL SCORING CONSIDERATIONS | DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

- Development ready (Ready to proceed)
- Specific site(s)
- Thoughtful approach to site selection – how will residents and neighborhoods benefit
- Equitable and inclusive site selection
- Other

NARRATIVE

IFA | IEDA are seeking communities that are intentionally and proactively driving the development of workforce and affordable housing in specific neighborhoods or sites. This category provides an opportunity for communities to describe specific needs in a neighborhood along with how future residents will benefit.

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STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP & PARTNERSHIPS

MAXIMUM POINTS

20 POINTS

REQUIRED | DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

- Mayor and City Council Support
- City Staff Support

Letters of support will be unsatisfactory. Examples of successful documentation include summaries of recent actions that support the community's commitment to diverse housing options, city policies, city resolutions, proactive efforts to connect residents with housing or other examples.

ADDITIONAL SCORING CONSIDERATIONS | DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

- Other local government or quasi government (county, school district, COG, etc) support
- Other local nonprofit organizations, especially those serving low-income households
- Local Neighborhood Support
- Innovation
- Other

NARRATIVE

IFA | IEDA are seeking communities that are going above and beyond as ambassadors for housing in their communities. This category is intentionally broad to allow for creative storytelling of how communities are leveraging innovative methods to attract housing opportunities for all income levels.

WORKFORCE ATTRACTION & RETENTION

MAXIMUM POINTS

20 POINTS

REQUIRED | DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

- Local Employer engagement and partnerships

Letters of support will be unsatisfactory. Examples of successful documentation includes summaries of recent actions that support the community's commitment to diverse housing options, proactive housing education or other efforts.

ADDITIONAL SCORING CONSIDERATIONS | DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

Employers with active employer-assisted housing initiatives, such as:

- Down payment assistance
- Partnerships to develop new housing for their workforce
- Employer assisted rental or homeownership education
- Employer sponsored inclusionary efforts
- Employer sponsored childcare
- New or expanding workforce demands
- Access to: Jobs, healthcare, schools, groceries and other essential services, broadband, childcare
- High school or community college trade program
- IEDA High Quality Jobs Awards within the past 5 years
- Other

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NARRATIVE

IFA | IEDA are seeking communities that have developed partnerships with employers to strengthen and invest in the community. This category allows for description of innovative and creative initiatives that are inclusive, supportive and responsive to the community and workforce needs.

THRIVING COMMUNITY ASPECTS

MAXIMUM POINTS	15 POINTS
• HEALTHY COMMUNITIES	10 POINTS
• CULTURALLY VIBRANT COMMUNITIES	5 POINTS

NARRATIVE

IFA | IEDA are seeking communities that are going above and beyond to promote housing, jobs, education and quality of life in their communities. This category provides an opportunity to describe other initiatives, programs and expansions in the community.