Grants Available for Trails, Public Transit, and Schools

The Transportation Commission awarded grants to a variety of communities and nonprofit organizations for recreational trails, assistance with reducing transportation-related emissions, and finding safe ways for kids to walk or ride bicycles to school.

Information about each of these grants, including application forms, can be found at www.sysplan.dot.state.ia.us/main_grants.htm.

Recreational Trails

Grants are available to public agencies and private organizations to provide and maintain motorized and non-motorized recreational trails and trail-related projects. The money approved by the commission came from the federal government and is distributed through Iowa's Department of Transportation (DOT).

Applications are due to Iowa's DOT by October 1 of every year, and Iowa has $1 million to award.

Reducing Emissions

Each year, close to $5 million is available that local public transit systems may apply for, or co-sponsor with private, non-profit organizations and individuals, for projects or programs that help in reducing transportation-related emissions. Applications are made under the Iowa Clean Air Attainment Program (ICAAP).

There is quite a range of projects that are eligible, from synchronizing street lights to expanding transit routes to recreational trails. Applications are due by October 1, and it does take approximately four months for the review process. Close to $5 million is available each year for grants.

Safe Routes to School

The Safe Routes to School program was created and funded at the federal level. Money from the program is to be used for both infrastructure and non-infrastructure improvements that will result in more students walking or bicycling to school. Iowa receives $1 million each year from the federal government.

This is one program where a local match is not required, and the application deadline is October 1 of every year. Both private and public schools may apply, as well as other entities such as non-profit organizations, local entities, and parent-teacher associations.