

Case Study

The Derelict Building Grant Program

Overview

The Derelict Building Grant Program (DBGP) was created in 2011 as a way to help small towns throughout Iowa address concerns posed by abandoned commercial or public buildings. As Program Manager, Scott Flagg explains that derelict buildings can pose many problems for communities, such as public safety concerns, fire hazards, and rodent and vector infestations.

Iowa has 867 towns with populations less than 5,000, which is the DBGP's primary market. The program provides financial assistance to these towns as well as qualifying counties in the form of

reimbursable funding for asbestos abatement, environmental site assessment(s), deconstruction, renovation or mothballing of city or county owned buildings. As of 2014, 119 applications have been submitted with 56 projects being funded.

Any city or county that is interested in applying to the DBGP simply needs to fill out an application prior to the program deadline. Each task listed in the project requires three quotes. The following table from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources DBGP brochure lists assistance types, reimbursements, and the maximum costs.

Assistance Type	Reimbursement	Max. Cost
Certified ACM Inspection: Certified asbestos inspectors will investigate derelict structures to determine the presence, prevalence & condition of asbestos.	100%	----
Removal & Disposal of ACM: Certified asbestos removal contractors will properly remove, manage & dispose of ACM. A 50% cost share is required for costs exceeding \$10,000.	100%	\$10,000
Structural Engineering Analysis: Licensed structural engineers will inspect derelict structures to assess the overall structural condition of the building.	100%	\$1,500
Phase I Environmental Assessment: Review known environmental records & land use information about the site & vicinity. Applicant is responsible for all costs exceeding \$3,000.	100%	\$3,000
Phase II Environmental Assessment: Soil, groundwater & structural materials sampling to confirm or deny if contamination is present. The need for this assessment is driven by the results of the Phase I Assessment. Applicant is responsible for costs exceeding \$5,000.	50%	\$2,500
Building Deconstruction: Dismantling of structures with purpose of maximizing recycling & reuse of materials to minimize landfill disposal. Goal of 30% landfill diversion by weight.	50%	\$50,000
Building Renovation: Using waste minimization, reuse & recycling practices, including use of salvaged or recycled content material during the renovation process. For offsetting costs related to removing materials for reuse, either at the site or offsite, or for recycling. The grant also compensates for purchase & installation of reused or recycled materials incorporated into the project.	50%	\$50,000

The University of Northern Iowa and the Iowa Waste Reduction Center are equal opportunity providers and employers.



Zearing City Clerk Marche Soe and Iowa DNR Scott Flagg, and Dennis McNamara check out the renovation progress.

Flagg added that deconstruction projects require an added component of diverting at least 30% of the material taken out of the building to receive a 50% reimbursement from the DBGP. With each 10% increase in diversion rates that exceeds the 30% minimum limit, the applicant's cost share is reduced by 5% with an increase in grant contributions to the project. Municipalities can apply multiple times and work on projects in stages. For example, a city or county owned building could receive financial assistance to remove asbestos in one summer. Then the next year, the city can re-apply for assistance to do exterior renovations on the same building.

Reuse and Recycle

The DBGP works to recycle and reuse as much material as possible. Project managers must submit copies of weight receipts of material headed to the landfill and of reused or recycled material. A letter from the person or business reusing or recycling materials must also be included in the project's final report with information about the materials and how it will be used. With this requirement in place, it is not uncommon for projects to achieve a 70-90% diversion rate.

In renovation projects, materials brought into the building must be recycled or reused items. No new materials, such as windows or doors, may be

purchased with DBGP funds. A common source for these materials are the many salvage markets across the state that specifically sell reuse and recycled items.

As mentioned earlier, mothballing is eligible to receive funds through the DBGP. This is the process of preparing a building for "storage" in which the building will be stabilized to prevent deterioration or the need for future demolition. This option allows the city or county more time to plan for the future of the building while making the area and structure safe.

Three Stops on the DBGP Trail for 2014

Flagg visited three of the 20 towns that were accepted into the DBGP for 2014 to check on their progress and answer questions. In the meetings, Flagg invites a representative from the local landfill, an Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) local representative from the Field Services and Compliance Bureau, the city clerk and any others interested.

The City of Roland

First stop, the city of Roland. Roland currently hosts city hall meetings in the water treatment facility. Familiar 70's brown paneling and a worn out, cramped look lend this structure to days past. Two other buildings located at 218 and 220 Main Street are slated to be deconstructed through the DBGP. These deconstructed buildings will eventually become the location for the new Roland City Hall.

POPULATION: 1,284

GRANT AMOUNT: \$21,000

PROJECT: Deconstruction

The meeting began sitting around a kitchen table pushed into a corner of the city hall building. Roland City Clerk, Jodi Meredith's, main concern was that the deconstruction project was put out for bids and received zero, and they want to obtain local contractors to work on the project. Flagg suggested since it's a busy time of year for contractors, to try and put the bid out again. Meredith mentioned this may warrant an adjustment of the starting date of the project, which was slated for July 1, 2014.

Meredith noted that approximately 75% of the building material is recoverable for reuse and recycling and asbestos abatement had already been finished prior to receiving the grant. Flagg stated that the Iowa DNR will need to be notified of a deconstruction plan prior to beginning work, plus the deconstruction process needs to be documented with photos before, during and after the project in addition to keeping any weight receipts of material headed to the landfill and reused or recycled material. Finally, Flagg stated a final report will be expected upon completion of the project and will need to include the photos and weight receipts.

The City of Zearing

Next up, the city of Zearing. The city received a grant to renovate an abandoned building at 107 West Main Street. Renovations included roof replacement, building stabilization and asbestos abatement.

POPULATION: 554

GRANT AMOUNT: \$23,800

PROJECT: Renovation

In the meeting, Flagg asked Marche Soe, Zearing City Clerk, about the progress of the renovation when she invited the group to tour the building. Walking in the front door of the building, the

amount of space was immediately evident as well as the nice wood flooring with patches here and there. The walls were draped in black soot from a previous fire with bits of brick peeking through plaster finish. No one could remember how long ago the fire occurred, not even the old-timer that was responsible for dumpster pick-up. The building was undergoing a positive transformation with studs being installed around the new stairwell going to the basement. Old molded tin covered the ceiling and was in a state of disrepair that would prohibit reuse. The windows in the building needed replacements and had a few stray bullet holes. Contractors were working to replace the roof during the meeting and tour. All in all, the space displayed great potential.

Soe believes the building needed to be renovated because in small towns such as Zearing, losing a building in the community center would be detrimental to the local economy. She shared her



Renovation with new stairwell and walls being built in Zearing.

idea of the perfect business to take over the newly renovated space, a bait and tackle shop that also rents canoes, kayaks or intertubes. With the nearby expansion of Dakins Lake that includes hiking trails, picnic shelters, boat ramps, campgrounds and fishing jetties, she believes this would be an ideal and fun business that would benefit the entire community. Soe expressed great enthusiasm for Zearing that was catching and creative. Flagg was visibly pleased with the ideas and progress of the renovation.

As the meeting in the building was wrapping up, people from the town started to wander in to take a look. The town superintendent, the architect working on the project, the dumpster hauler, the contractor and a couple of other folks interested in seeing the progress stepped inside to inspect the changes. Zearing is one of those small towns in Iowa where community means so much!

The City of Collins

The final stop on Flagg's trail was Collins. The town received a grant to renovate the abandoned library, replace the roof and stabilize the building. Heather Hall, the librarian, opened the library for a tour.

POPULATION: 495

GRANT AMOUNT: \$15,600

PROJECT: Renovation

The space is open and inviting with a large room off the side that can be rented for parties or meetings. The library is neat and organized with colorful posters hanging on the walls, and the space looks brand new and clean.

Hall pointed out the ceiling tiles in the newly renovated room. Water stains littered the ceiling and looked completely out of place amidst the newly painted walls, columns and flooring.

Through the DBGP funding, the roof is going to be replaced with a metal roof while encapsulating the old leaking roof. The encapsulation process allows for 100% diversion with no material headed to the landfill and no need to find resale or recycle markets. Flagg seemed impressed with the progress of the project.

Moving the Program Forward

As the day was drawing to a close, Flagg stated that he would like to see more funding for the DBGP and would really like to work with communities to prevent derelict buildings in the first place. Once water penetrates the roof and is allowed to run through the building for an extended period of time, the building is very difficult to rehabilitate. In this situation, the value left in the building is lost and there is nothing left to do but demolish the structure and push it into a landfill. The DBGP works to prevent this scenario and is doing a great job, one small town at a time.



The Newly Renovated Collins Public Library