

NORTHEAST IOWA COMMUNITY ACTION CORPORATION  
305 MONTGOMERY STREET, P.O. BOX 487  
DECORAH, IA 52101

Approved

The Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation Board of Directors meeting was held on Monday, November 24, 2025, at the Fayette County Courthouse. The Finance Committee met at 5:45 pm. The Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm. Board Chair, Les Askelson, called the meeting to order followed by reciting the NEICAC mission statement. Roll call was taken.

Present were:

|                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Corey Cerwinski           | Dan Byrnes               |
| Janel Langreck            | Jeff Bunn                |
| Shirley Vermace (Virtual) | Joseph Pisney            |
| Jasmin Morrison (Virtual) | Suellen Kolbet (Virtual) |
| Les Askelson              | Nick Winter (Virtual)    |
| Wendy Shea                | Steve Doeppke            |

Trisha Wilkins, Staff  
Karli Schmelzer, Staff  
Chrishelle Stravers, Staff  
Nichole Griese, Staff

Board members unable to attend are as follows:

|                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Stacie Cooper (4) | Steve Breitbach    |
| Jessica Goltz     | Melissa Nation     |
| Cindy Yslas       | Melissa Timmermans |
| Linda Voshell     | Nina Brickman      |
| Marcia Hesse      |                    |

The first agenda item was review of the 11/24/25 meeting agenda. Move to approve the 11/24/25 meeting agenda by Joseph Pisney, seconded by Steve Doeppke. Motion carried all voting aye.

The next item was the consent agenda which included the minutes for the 10/27/25 Board Meeting; November Program and Agency Dashboard Report; Head Start, Early Head Start, CACFP Reports and Policy Council Minutes; LIHEAP and Crisis Reports; and set next meeting date of January 26, 2026 (Virtual). Move to approve the consent agenda by Suellen Kolbet, seconded by Corey Cerwinski. Motion carried all voting aye.

Trisha Wilkins then reviewed with the Board the October Financial Reports. Move to approve the October Financial Reports as presented by Joseph Pisney, seconded by Steve Doeppke. Motion carried all voting aye. The balance sheet was included with the Board packet and was for the Board's information.

Joseph Pisney presented on behalf of the Finance Committee, stating that everything looked to be in order with no discrepancies noted. Move to approve the Finance Committee report of the bill and credit card statements as presented by Dan Byrnes, seconded by Janel Langreck. Motion carried all voting aye.

Nichole Griese, FaDSS Coordinator, was the agency's presenter for the month. Nichole provided a handout of the Fiscal Year 2025 Contract Measures for the FaDSS program, which included program contract measures, indicators, targets, and outcomes. FaDSS has 42 enrolled families and is currently going through the annual state review. The Board thanked Nichole Griese for the information and for all the work accomplished by the FaDSS staff.

The next item on the agenda was the submission of the Thrive Iowa Program Request for Proposal (RFP) as shared by Nichole Griese. Thrive Iowa is a new, community-led effort designed to help families move from crisis to career by addressing barriers across multiple areas of life, such as housing, employment, transportation, and family stability. NEICAC is applying to serve as the local contractor for Thrive Iowa in Northeast Iowa. As part of this role, NEICAC would coordinate a local Community Alliance of service providers, employers, and organizations that work together to strengthen families and improve long-term self-sufficiency. The grant funding is \$138,000 for January – June 2026 and \$277,000 for each year ending in June of 2027, 2028, and 2029. Move to approve the submission of the Thrive Iowa Program Request for Proposal as presented by Wendy Shea, seconded by Corey Cerwinski. Motion carried all voting aye.

Next, Trisha Wilkins shared that the Personnel Committee met on Friday, November 14, 2025. A Summary of NEICAC Employee Handbook Policy Manual and the wage increase and budget data for agency positions and programs were provided. The Personnel Committee has recommended approval of revisions to the Employee Handbook under the following sections: Classes and Categories of Employment, Working Hours, Sick Leave, Incentive Compensation Program, Training and Career Development, Employee Safety, Generative AI Policy, Reporting Abuse, Volatile Home or Neighborhood, and grammar/title changes throughout the handbook. Move to approve the NEICAC Employee Handbook Policy Manual revisions as presented by Joseph Pisney, seconded by Janel Langreck. Motion carried all voting aye. Also recommended by the Personnel Committee was a 1% cost-of-living increase for all employees, effective on the first payroll that begins in FY26, along with the annual steps. Move to approve the 1% wage increase for all agency positions and annual steps, effective the first payroll that begins in FY26 as presented by Jasmine Morrison, seconded by Wendy Shea. Motion carried all voting aye.

Trisha Wilkins then shared the agency's Health Insurance benefit update. Trisha shared the plan and premium changes to the three health insurance options that are offered to eligible employees. This was for the Board's information.

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) reports were next on the agenda. The first component is the agency's National Performance Indicators for Individuals and Families and Community Initiatives year-end report for program year 2025 (October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025). The programs included within these indicators are FaDSS, Weatherization, Head Start, Crisis, Housing, and the LIHEAP Emergency Crisis Program. The second component for the CSBG reporting is the FY25 CSBG Year-End & Agency Resources Report. This was for the Board's information.

The next agenda item is the Waukon Building USDA Loan Budget. Trisha Wilkins shared the annual budget for the USDA loan for the NEICAC-owned building in Waukon that houses both Head Start

and Family Services. Move to approve the Waukon Building USDA Loan Budget as presented by Joseph Pisney, seconded by Dan Byrnes. Motion carried all voting aye.

NEICAC General Relief Program budgets were next on the agenda. Trisha Wilkins shared the FY27 proposed budgets for Howard, Fayette, Chickasaw, and Winneshiek Counties that would begin July 1, 2026. This was for the Board's information.

The next agenda item was an update on the Annual Fundraising Campaign. Trisha Wilkins shared that as of November 12, we received \$17,020.49 from 40 donors compared to \$4,475 from 19 donors at this time last year. Nichole Griese connected with the Landing Market in Decorah which will donate 20% of all sales on Saturday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, to our Decorah food pantry. Trisha asked to let her know if there were any questions on how to help spread the word about the campaign or if you have contacts we should reach out to by mail or email. This was for the Board's information.

Trisha Wilkins provided a Housing Program status update regarding Woolen Mill and Calmar Apartments. This was for the Board's information.

Next was review and approval of NEICAC 2024 IRS Form 990. Trisha emailed a PDF version earlier and this will be posted to the NEICAC website under the "Publications Tab". Move to approve the NEICAC 2024 IRS Form 990 as presented by Suellen Kolbet, seconded by Corey Cerwinski. Motion carried all voting aye.

Federal and State legislative/funding updates were next on the agenda. Trisha Wilkins shared that the past 30 days had been busy with advocacy, press interviews, and updates to the public on funding and program concerns. Trisha shared after 42 days; the federal shutdown ended. The House passed a Continuing Resolution on 11/12/25, and the President has signed the bill to fund the government. This will fund NEICAC programs, including the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and Head Start through 1/30/26. We are hopeful for an expedited release of funds from the administration to continue providing our vital services.

Trisha Wilkins then reviewed the Grants, Contracts, and Funding Report. This included contract amendments for the Department of Energy Weatherization Assistance. We were also awarded \$2,500 for the Chickasaw County Crisis program from Theisen's More for Your Community Grant. This was for the Board's information.

Next, Trisha Wilkins shared her CEO Report. This was for the Board's information.

Move to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 pm, cancel the December meeting and set the next meeting date to January 26, 2025, by Joseph Pisney, seconded by Janel Langreck. Motion carried all voting aye.

Reporting Secretary



Chrishelle Stravers, CFO