

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, January 26, 2026, via Microsoft TEAMS. 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	Joseph Pisney
Steve Breitbach	Cindy Yslas
Jasmin Morrison	Melissa Nation
Shirley Vermace	Nick Winter
Les Askelson	Dan Byrnes
Linda Voshell	Jeff Bunn
Wendy Shea	Nina Brickman

Karli Schmelzer, Staff
Chrishelle Stravers, Staff

Guest:

Karl Eck, WIPFLI

Board members unable to attend are as follows:

Stacie Cooper (5)	Steve Doeppke
Janel Langreck	Melissa Timmermans
Jessica Goltz	Marcia Hesse

The first agenda item was a review of the 1/26/26 meeting agenda. It was noted that Item #14 be amended to remove the approval of the Allamakee County Community Foundation cash match, as board approval is no longer required for the grant. Move to approve the 1/26/26 meeting agenda with the noted revision by Shirely Vermace, seconded by Dan Byrnes. Motion carried all voting aye.

The next item was the consent agenda which included the minutes for the 11/24/25 Board Meeting; minutes for the 12/10/25 Fundraising Committee Meeting; 12/12/25 Executive Committee Meeting minutes; January 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 February 23, 2026 (Virtual). Move to approve the consent agenda by Corey Cerwinski, seconded by Cindy Yslas. Motion carried all voting aye.

This month's presenter was Karl Eck with WIPFLI. He provided the Board with audit planning and processing information. The two main programs for the audit are EARL Public Transit and LIHEAP. The audit should be finalized by May 18th for the presentation to the Board. This was for the Board's information.

Chrishelle Stravers then reviewed with the Board the November Financial Reports. Move to approve the November Financial Reports as presented by Dan Byrnes, seconded by Cindy Yslas. Motion carried all voting aye. The balance sheet was included with the Board packet and was for the Board's information.

Dan Byrnes 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 Joseph Pisney. Motion carried all voting aye.

The annual agency-wide budget was next on the agenda. Chrishelle Stravers shared that it includes projected budgets for all agency programs for the next fiscal year. The data used for the projections includes current funding contracts and the history of other revenue and expenses. Moved to approve the agency-wide budget as presented by Nina Brickman, seconded by Cindy Yslas. Motion carried all voting aye.

Chrishelle Stravers then shared an update on the CEO Succession Plan. The main revisions to the plan were position titles. Moved to approve the CEO Succession Plan as presented by Shirley Vermace, seconded by Cindy Yslas. Motion carried all voting aye.

Next on the agenda was an update for the NEICAC Strategic Plan. Chrishelle Stravers shared a snapshot of the plan that indicated the current objective status. This was for the Board's information.

The updated Head Start & Early Head Start program selection criteria was the next item on the agenda. The Criteria Selection for Children policy and point sheet were enclosed. Chrishelle Stravers shared there were no changes from last year's approved policy, but the point sheet had a revision on page one with the WRAP points being removed. Moved to approve the Criteria Selection for Children policy and point sheet as presented by Wendy Shea, seconded by Nick Winter. Motion carried all voting aye.

Chrishelle Stravers stated that the implementation of the Thrive Iowa program continues to move forward. Interviews have been completed for the Thrive Coordinator position. An affiliate licensing agreement has been executed with Restore Hope, the organization successfully operating this model in Arkansas. Restore Hope will serve as a key implementation partner and will provide training and technical assistance as we launch the program. Office space in Oelwein has been secured, and we are working to secure office space in Guttenberg to support the service in Clayton County. Wendy Shea offered to assist with space in Clayton County if needed. This was for the Board's information.

NEICAC Leadership Team updates were next on the agenda. Chrishelle Stravers shared there have been two new promotions for the Program Director staff. Nichole Griese has been promoted to the Family & Community Impact Director role. Julie Buddenberg has been promoted to Weatherization & Housing Director.

Next on the agenda were requested revisions to agency job positions. Positions include Family Services Coordinator, Thrive Coordinator, Weatherization & Housing Director, Family & Community Impact Director and Outreach Director. Move to approve the updated job descriptions and NEICAC salary scale with revisions as presented by Shirley Vermace, seconded by Cindy Yslas. Motion carried all voting aye.

An update on the NEICAC Fundraising Committee was next on the agenda. Chrishelle Stravers shared there was no new information, but there is a scheduled meeting for 1/28/26. Wendy Shea recognized the need for fundraising based on budget shortfalls; she encouraged members to get involved. This was for the Board's information.

Chrishelle Stravers then reviewed the Grants, Contracts, and Funding Report. As noted previously with the agenda revision approval, we do not need the approval of the Allamakee Cash Match. Amendments were received for the DOE and Black Hills, for Weatherization. In addition, the new Thrive grant was received. The grants, contracts, and funding report was for the Board's information.

Next, Chrishelle Stravers shared the CEO's Report. This was for the Board's information.

Legislative updates were next on the agenda. We are monitoring the Continuing Resolution expiration on 1/30/26. Also, NCAF has been working on a draft letter of support for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), addressed to Vice President Vance. The network of Community Action agencies contacted their House members of the federal delegation; both Representative Hinson and Representative Miller Meeks have signed on to support this. This was for the Board's information.

Lastly, Chrishelle Stravers shared that it's time again for the Board to review the agency's mission and vision statement. A Doodle poll will be sent out to the NEICAC Planning Committee members following the meeting. Once the committee has a recommendation on whether to revise or continue our current mission/vision, it will be brought to the full Board for approval. This was for the Board's information.

Moved to adjourn the meeting by Corey Cerwinski, seconded by Shirley Vermace. Motion carried all voting aye.

Reporting Secretary



Karli Schmelzer, COO