

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, February 23, 2026, via Microsoft TEAMS. The Finance Committee met at 5:45 pm. The Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Board Chair Les Askelson called the meeting to order, followed by reciting the NEICAC mission statement. Roll call was taken.

Present were:

Corey Cerwinske	Janel Langreck
Steve Breitbach	Marcia Hesse
Jasmin Morrison	Melissa Nation
Les Askelson	Nick Winter
Linda Voshell	Dan Byrnes
Wendy Shea	Jeff Bunn
Melissa Timmermans	Nina Brickman

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

Guest:

Page Humphrey, Iowa HHS Bureau Chief of Community Services

Board members unable to attend are as follows:

Stacie Cooper (6)	Steve Doeppke (2)
Joseph Pisney	Shirley Vermace
Jessica Goltz (2)	Cindy Yslas

The first agenda item was a review of the 2/23/26 meeting agenda. Move to approve the 2/23/26 meeting agenda by Linda Voshell, seconded by Corey Cerwinske. Motion carried all voting aye.

The next item was the consent agenda which included the minutes for the 1/26/26 Board Meeting; minutes for the 1/28/26 Fundraising Committee Meeting; February 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 March 23, 2026 (in person). Move to approve the consent agenda by Nick Winter, seconded by Janel Langreck. Motion carried all voting aye.

Trisha Wilkins then reviewed with the Board the January Financial Reports. Move to approve the January Financial Reports as presented by Nick Winter, seconded by Corey Cerwinske. 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 Janel Langreck. Motion carried all voting aye.

This month's presenter was Page Humphrey, the Iowa HHS Bureau Chief of Community Services, to discuss NEICAC's newest endeavor, the Thrive Iowa Initiative. Thrive Iowa will create a network of navigators to help individuals find immediate support from community organizations, then support them over time helping them develop an individualized plan for self-sufficiency and long-term independence. Corey Cerwinski asked if the plan was to have all 99 counties served, and what was the timeline. Page Humphrey shared that the current goal within two years is to have 26 backbone organizations, which could cover 70 counties, with no more than 3 counties per backbone organization. NEICAC is considered a backbone organization. Wendy Shea asked how it was different from local offices and how referrals work. Page Humphrey stated there was no wrong door to approach, and it would have cross sector representation. She also added that the Thrive Iowa Initiative is for 8-12 months of help with more intensive needs. The Board thanked Page for her information.

The next item on the agenda was the agency's Fiscal Policy and Procedures Manual updates. Chrishelle Stravers shared a summary of the revisions. Sections that were revised include; Accounts Receivable Management for Transit, Procurement Threshold increase, Functional Expense Allocations and Classification of Workers. The full manual will be posted to the Board Portal. Move to approve the Fiscal Policy and Procedures Manual updates by Janel Langreck, seconded by Jasmin Morrison. Motion carried all voting aye.

Head Start Bylaw revisions were next on the agenda. Trisha Wilkins shared there are no proposed changes from last year and therefore no action is required.

Housing Program updates were next on the agenda. Trisha Wilkins shared a purchase agreement and addendum for the Woolen Mill and Calmar Apartments. Wendy Shea asked how the building would be used after the sale; Ben Harman, with Urban Management Group, had joined the meeting as a member of the public, responded that there are no plans to change anything with the buildings regarding tenancy. Trisha Wilkins stated that NEICAC would be there to aid tenants if they would like to move elsewhere. Iowa Finance Authority has signed off on releasing the LURA (restricted land use agreement) on Woolen Mill, which is a condition of this transfer of ownership. Move to approve the purchase offer for both Woolen Mills and Calmar Apartments as presented by Corey Cerwinski, seconded by Jeff Bunn. Motion carried all voting aye.

Trisha Wilkins then discussed an agency job description and wage scale for the Thrive Navigator position. Move to approve the Thrive Navigator job description and wage scale as presented by Wendy Shea, seconded by Dan Byrnes. Motion carried all voting aye.

Next, Trisha Wilkins shared that the Fundraising Committee met in January to continue important conversations about how to collectively support NEICAC's fundraising efforts. The discussion focused on clarifying the roles of the full Board, the Fundraising Committee, and staff, reinforcing that strengthening unrestricted funding is a shared responsibility. The committee brainstormed

realistic, meaningful ways for Board members to be involved, from donor stewardship and outreach to opening doors within their own networks. Staff are working on an annual fundraising calendar and impact materials to support these efforts. This was for the Board's information.

The next item on the agenda was a Planning Committee update. Trisha Wilkins shared that the Planning Committee was working on the review of NEICAC's mission and vision statements. Their first meeting was scheduled for Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>. This was for the Board's information.

Trisha Wilkins updated the Board on the HAWC area local board and staffing changes. Iowa legislation is currently being considered to regionalize the state ECI system into the seven regions already adopted by the Behavioral Health system. She has served on the local area HAWC Board since 2024 and resigned effective 2/28/26. This was for the Board's information.

Grants, Contracts and Fundraising was next on the agenda. Trisha Wilkins stated it included amendments for Weatherization Assistance from Department of Energy, Alliant Energy, and Mid-American Energy, along with an amendment for LIHEAP. Trisha Wilkins also shared that the 2025-2026 Annual Campaign has officially wrapped up, with a total of 76 generous donors. Trisha Wilkins thanked everyone who helped share NEICAC's message and encouraged support this year.

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

Lastly, legislative updates were next on the agenda. Trisha Wilkins shared there is some concerning legislation moving through state committees, with one addressing a 5% cap on indirect costs for grant funding. This would make it impossible to operate indirect costs, we are at just over 13%, one of the lowest in Iowa's CA network. This bill is continuing to move forward, with the legislators acknowledging that the cap must be raised to ensure sustainability. The Early Childhood Iowa regionalization continues to be discussed with HHS, which already includes proposed changes from the initial bill. It still reduces the 33 ECIs to the 7 regionalized areas. There was a brief federal shutdown, but most FY26 appropriations bills have now been passed by both the House and the Senate. The HHS and Energy & Commerce bills moved through with minor increases across all our programs. NEICAC staff participated in FaDSS Day on the Hill to strengthen relationships with state legislators and advocate for continued support. Staff met with Representatives Bergan, Ingels, and Gearhart, as well as Senator Salmon, to share local and statewide program outcomes and to highlight a family success story that reflects the long-term value of FaDSS. Conversation also included a request for a 5% funding increase as the last increase for the program was in 2020. This was for the Board's information.

Moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:58 by Nick Winter, seconded by Corey Cerwinski. Motion carried all voting aye.

Reporting Secretary



Chrishelle Stravers, CFO