



CITY OF MUSCATINE  
215 SYCAMORE STREET  
MUSCATINE, IA 52761  
PH. (563) 264-1550 • FAX (563) 264-0750

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## CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

For more information contact:

Kevin Jenison  
Communication Manager  
E-Mail: [kjenison@muscatineiowa.gov](mailto:kjenison@muscatineiowa.gov)  
Phone: (563) 264-1550 • Fax: (563) 264-0750

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **MUSCATINE RECEIVES HUD HOUSING COUNSELING GRANT**

*Grant will help fund housing counselor and education programs*

**MUSCATINE, Iowa** – The Muscatine Municipal Housing Agency (MMHA), a department of the City of Muscatine, has been awarded a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing counseling grant to continue home ownership education classes and counseling services.

MMHA provides a range of housing services to promote personal, economic, and social upward mobility for low-income families. As the designated public housing agency for the region, MMHA provides safe, decent, and affordable housing opportunities to low-income residents of Muscatine County through its Public Housing and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher programs.

Utilizing housing as a foundation to support the efforts of families to improve their economic and social conditions, MMHA also offers family self-sufficiency, educational, and housing counseling programs.

“This program allows the housing agency to assist residents in the community prepare for their next housing decision, if that is as a first-time renter or first-time homebuyer, through group classes and one-on-one counseling sessions,” Jodi Royal-Goodwin, Director of Community Development, said.

“Individual counseling can address a range of issues from checking and repairing credit, preparing and evaluating personal budgets, reviewing mortgage loan terms, and so much more,” Royal-Goodwin said. “These counseling activities support long-term housing stability and the provision of quality housing to all residents. “

The \$17,166 grant was part of \$42.8 million in housing counseling HUD grants that will help approximately one million Americans make more informed housing choices, keep their current homes, or receive assistance to help them avoid foreclosure. Nearly half of the state and local counseling agencies awarded HUD grants received preference because they will provide counseling to individuals and families within designated Opportunity Zones.

Muscatine was one of two cities in Iowa that received bonus points for furthering the drive for public investment in Opportunity Zone areas.

The MMHA became a HUD-approved housing counseling agency in 2008 and began providing homeownership education. Through this program the Agency has assisted more than 1,000 families prepare to purchase their first home in Muscatine County through the homebuyer education program and one-on-one Counseling. In the past five years, 251 households have completed the homebuyer education class, 134 of which have purchased a home in Muscatine County.

In 2017, MMHA began offering a rental seminar called Step Ahead which educates renters on tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities. Over 200 households have completed the Step Ahead class. In addition to the services above, the MMHA Housing Counselor is trained to assist residents with financial management, budgeting, credit repair and fair housing. Services are focused on meeting client needs and supporting sustainable participation in the local housing market.