



For Immediate Release
Friday, July 18, 2025

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Iowa Grocers Award Build with Bags Grants in 2025

New park benches, picnic tables and trash cans will help to beautify parks and schools throughout Iowa this summer, courtesy of the Iowa Grocery Industry Association's Build with Bags program.

Seven Iowa communities will be receiving grants of up to \$2,000 to purchase items made from recycled plastic bags. Items include park benches made by Plastic Recycling of Iowa Falls. One park bench represents approximately 10,600 bags that won't end up in the landfill.

"We are excited to announce the winners of this year's Build with Bags grants," says Michelle Hurd, president of the Iowa Grocery Industry Association. "Now in its 16th year, the program continues to encourage individuals to recycle their plastic bags so those bags can be turned into products that beautify our communities. We are proud to reward this year's grant winners for their recycling efforts."

A total of 13 applications were submitted from which six winners were selected by a committee of representatives in support of the Build with Bags program. Each committee member individually scored the applications. The scores were then combined for an overall point total. This year, the top six applicants with the most points received grants totaling \$11,360.

Applications were evaluated based on set criteria that included a statement of need for the grant and the community's own plastic bag recycling efforts. Grant applicants were also asked to verify the recycled plastic content in the products they were looking to purchase and to obtain an endorsement letter from a local grocer who is supportive of the community's project and recycling plans.

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Geographic location also played a factor as the committee sought to disperse the grant awards around the state of Iowa. Local Iowa grocers played an important role in making the grants possible. Store representatives throughout the state wrote letters of support that led to their communities being selected to receive a grant.

“While the endorsement letter was not the most weighted category in the selection process, it is an important component of the Build with Bags program,” Hurd explains. “It reflects how the applying community is working with its local grocers to establish long-term projects and goals that help increase the awareness of plastic bag recycling.”

Encouraging purchases of furniture and equipment made from recycled plastic for parks and schools through its grant program is one of four goals established by Build with Bags partners. The other three include increasing the number of plastic bags recycled, reducing consumption of plastic bags and increasing the safe use of reusable bags.

Participating retailers include Fareway Stores and Hy-Vee locations statewide plus many independent grocers.

Build with Bags is a cooperative effort of the Iowa Grocery Industry Association, Keep Iowa Beautiful, Metro Waste Authority in Des Moines and Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Originally launched in August 2009, the Build with Bags Grant program has awarded \$ 381,804 in grants to approximately 250 Iowa communities.

For more information on Build with Bags Grants, visit www.iowagrocers.com.

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2025 Grant Recipients

Organization Name	Grant Amount	Project	Local Grocer
City of Alden	\$1,938	2 Picnic tables and 2 Benches	Stephanie Dagel, Hy-Vee Iowa Falls
City of Havelock Hometown Pride Committee	\$1,791	One Picnic table and One ADA accessible picnic tables	Kent Woods, Woods Supermarket
Friends of Mahaska County Conservation	\$2,000	6 ADA Picnic tables and 2 trash cans	John Stearns, Fareway Oskaloosa
Pocahontas Hometown Pride Committee	\$1,632	6 Benches	Kent Woods, Woods Supermarket
Wayne County Fair	\$2,000	Benches, picnics tables and trash cans	Becca Bellman, Hy-Vee Corydon
Winneshiek County Conservation	\$2,000	8 Picnic tables	Ariana Cervantes, Hy-Vee Decorah

About the Iowa Grocery Industry Association

The Iowa Grocery Industry Association is a state trade association that represents the food industry, including chain and independent supermarkets, convenience stores, mass merchandisers, wholesalers, brokers, manufacturers and distributors. Founded in 1899, the IGIA has long served as a resource to its members, the food industry and the general public through education, legislative, partnership and philanthropic programs. The IGIA has headquarters in Urbandale, Iowa, and can be found online at www.iowagrocers.com.

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