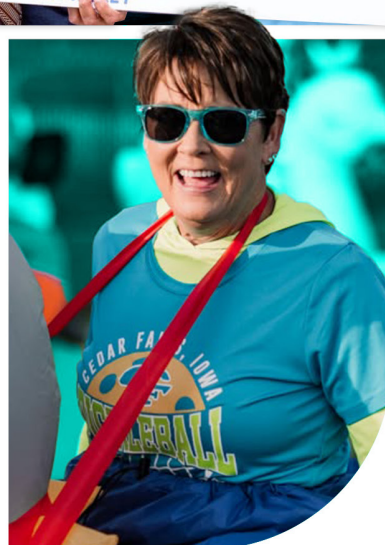


FY  
25

Annual Report



BLACK HAWK COUNTY

# Gaming Association



# Transforming Places & Spaces to Build a Stronger Community



LETTER FROM THE

## Executive Director



“

At BHC GA, we work to strategically invest in economic development and community betterment projects to help the Cedar Valley remain competitive.”

As we reflect on this past year, the Black Hawk County Gaming Association (BHC GA) is, above all else, grateful and humbled to serve our community.

During Fiscal Year 25 (FY25), our board approved \$5,981,979 to benefit cities and nonprofit organizations across our service area in Northeast Iowa. We were also pleased to announce that three new legacy projects, investments over \$500,000, were selected to continue enhancing public infrastructure and resources available in the Cedar Valley. It is truly inspiring to see the great work our partners are doing to build better cities, neighborhoods, and organizations.

We would be remiss not to acknowledge that in February, the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission (IRGC) publicly voted in favor of allowing a new casino to operate in Linn County. Market studies indicate this will impact our funding in the future. While it was not the outcome that we wanted in the Cedar Valley, we continue to move forward with our important work.

Thank you to the hundreds of people who shared stories, publicly and privately, throughout the process about the positive impact the Isle Casino Hotel Waterloo and BHC GA have had on our community over the last 18 years. It is an incredible honor for our board and staff to serve the Cedar Valley. We appreciate the support that has been shown and come out of FY25 with an even greater sense of purpose.

As the largest funder in Black Hawk County, BHC GA remains steadfast in our goal of helping the Cedar Valley prosper by transforming places and spaces. We will continue to invest in important economic development projects that make Northeast Iowa a great place to live, work, and play!

*Emily Hanson*

Emily Hanson  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# Impact Snapshot

## Where has our funding gone since 2008?

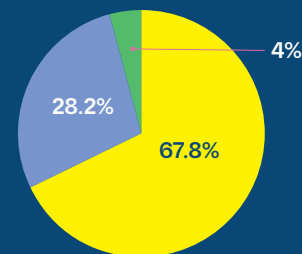
Total Dollars Reinvested in the Cedar Valley from BHC GA:  
**\$83,082,147**

Total Number of Grants Awarded Since 2008:  
**719**

Total Number of Legacy Grants Funded:  
**41**

### Historical Breakdown by City/Government, Nonprofit, and Contiguous Counties Grants

- BHC City/Government: **67.8%**
- BHC Nonprofit Organizations: **28.2%**
- Contiguous Counties: **4%**



Percentage of our grants that have funded capital projects.

# 86%

## Where did our funding go in FY25?

Total Dollars Awarded in FY25:  
**\$5,981,979**

Dollars Awarded from FY25 Competitive Cycles:  
**\$3,611,950**

Awards Approved in FY25:  
**30**

Percentage of LOIs Submitted that Receive Funding:  
**21%**

Number of Cities Awarded Funds in FY25:  
**10**

Types of Grants by Amount Awarded:  
Capital Grants: **95%**  
Capacity Building: **3%**  
Contiguous Counties: **2%**

# FY25 Board of Directors

The members of Black Hawk County Gaming Association Board of Directors volunteer their time, energy, and expertise to help move our mission forward. With careful attention to every grant application, the Board approves projects that strengthen communities and expand vital nonprofit services across the Cedar Valley.



Kingsley Botchway  
President



Melanie Knipp  
Vice President



Selvedina Samardzic  
Secretary



Jane Whittlesey  
Treasurer



Eric Ritland  
At-Large



Scott Becker



Stacey Bentley



Russ Buchanan



Shawn Chestnut



John Huff



Chiquita Loveless



Mike Tyer



Stacy Van Gorp



LeKeisha Veasley

“As the demand for our grants grows more competitive, our role is to be thoughtful stewards of the funds entrusted to us by the Isle. We are committed to ensuring those resources are used wisely to create the greatest possible impact.”

Kingsley Botchway, President  
Black Hawk County Gaming Association



# FY25 Grants Awarded

The Black Hawk County Gaming Association Board of Directors approved the following grants during our competitive grant cycles between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025.

**Congratulations to all of our grant partners this past fiscal year!**

Each grant cycle includes four stages:

- Letter of Intent
- Evaluation
- Application
- Decision

To learn more about our grant cycles, visit:  
**bhcga.org**

Recipient Name	Project	Type of Grant	Amount
Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity	Strategic Giving Initiative	Capital	\$1,000,000
Northeast Iowa Food Bank	From Hunger to Hope: Building a Secure Tomorrow	Capital	\$1,000,000
University of Northern Iowa	UNI-Dome Phase 2: Elevating the Fan Experience	Capital	\$1,000,000
Family YMCA of Black Hawk County	Re-Visioning & Renovation	Capital	\$170,000
City of Evansdale	Angels Park Water Quality & Restrooms	Capital	\$150,000
River Hills School	Transform Old Pool to New Sensory Space	Capital	\$100,000
Friends of the National Cattle Congress	Re-Development Plan Consultant	Capacity Building	\$50,000
City of Independence	Fire Department Extrication Equipment	Contiguous County	\$20,000
City of Tama	Safe Routes Network	Contiguous County	\$20,000
City of Fairbank	Ball Diamond Updates	Contiguous County	\$15,000
Try Pie Bakery	Strategic Planning	Capacity Building	\$15,000
Cedar Valley Preschool	Raise the Roof	Capital	\$14,250
City of New Hartford	Martin Memorial Library	Contiguous County	\$12,000
Operation 11th Hour	Handicap Accessible Fishing Pier	Contiguous County	\$10,850
Comprehensive Systems	New Hampton Home	Contiguous County	\$10,000
Cedar Valley Angels	Professional Development and Equipment	Capacity Building	\$9,500
Riverview Center	Sustainable Sexual Assault Intervention Services	Capacity Building	\$7,350
City of Nashua	Outdoor Warning System	Contiguous County	\$5,000
Waverly Health Foundation	Center for Pediatric Therapies	Contiguous County	\$3,000

\$3,611,950 total



# FY25 Award Spotlight



## Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity

### Strategic Giving Initiative \$1 million

Through its new Strategic Giving Initiative (SGI), IHHFH is advancing a bold three-year vision to deepen impact across Waterloo. SGI unites strategic funding partners to expand affordable housing, critical home repairs, financial coaching, and neighborhood revitalization. With a focus on sustainability and equity, IHHFH is building lasting change: acquiring property, enhancing homeownership support, and strengthening communities for generations to come.

“Our partnership with BHCga has helped revitalize historic neighborhoods, turning them into more than communities — they’re becoming families.”

Ali Parish, Executive Director  
Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity



### Elevating the Fan Experience \$1 million

The UNI-Dome has been a landmark in the Cedar Valley since 1976. It hosts 40+ events annually and draws 500,000 visitors, boosting local businesses and community pride. Now undergoing a \$52 million modernization, the project enhances accessibility, fan amenities, and student-athlete facilities. With Phase One complete, Phase Two focuses on comprehensive reseating and restroom upgrades, ensuring the UNI-Dome remains a premier regional venue and resource.



### Strategic Planning for Growth \$15,000

Try Pie, a workforce development program for young women in the Cedar Valley, is preparing for strategic growth amid upcoming funding changes. To expand teen participation and build long-term sustainability, Try Pie plans to engage SWIM (See What I Mean) for a 2025 strategic planning process. With deep community roots and a decade of impact, the organization seeks to strengthen staffing and fundraising capacity to support its next chapter.



“The UNI-Dome has been a cornerstone of this community and an iconic building in Iowa. This renovation is about building a next-generation facility for the community, region, and state.”

Megan Franklin, Director of Panther Athletics  
University of Northern Iowa





## Family YMCA of Black Hawk County

### Re-Visioning & Renovation

\$170,000

The Family YMCA of Black Hawk County is reimagining its facility to enhance community access, safety, and wellness. Key upgrades include expanded health and fitness spaces, a relocated and upgraded Early Learning Center with secure access, and new community areas for programs and training. Infrastructure improvements like enhanced locker rooms and pool systems ensure greater accessibility, privacy, and safety for all who use the Y’s services.

“

Through this generous lead gift, the Family YMCA of Black Hawk County is able to impact thousands of community members for years to come. I am forever grateful to the BHCGA Board of Directors for their support in the YMCA Re-Visioning project. The project would not have been possible without this grant.”

Norm Johnson, CEO  
Family YMCA of Black Hawk County



## River Hills School



### From Old Pool to New Sensory Space

\$100,000

River Hills is currently in the process of transforming its unused 60-year-old pool into a state-of-the-art sensory room, serving 90 students with significant disabilities from over 30 districts. This innovative space will provide a safe, adaptive environment for sensory development, emotional regulation, and social connection. Replacing outdated facilities, the project supports families, eases district burdens, and reinforces River Hills’ role as a vital, inclusive resource for specialized education in the region.

### Accessible Fishing Pier

\$10,850

Operation 11th Hour, a nonprofit of VFW Post 2440, led efforts to build an accessible fishing pier at Triangle Pond in Independence. In partnership with the American Legion and City of Independence, the project enhanced outdoor access for veterans, seniors, and the community. With strong local support and funding secured, the initiative now promotes recreation and quality of life for all.

“ We are grateful for the Black Hawk County Gaming Association’s support, which allowed us to complete the project quickly and inspired others to give.”

George Lake, Committee Member  
Operation 11th Hour



## VFW Post 2440 Operation 11th Hour



## Cedar Valley Preschool & Child Care Center



### Raise the Roof

\$14,250

Cedar Valley Preschool & Child Care Center (CVPCCC), a trusted nonprofit serving children ages 18 months to 10 years, raised funds to replace its aging roof and ensure a safe, healthy environment. With a 55-year history, diverse enrollment, and the county’s only Nature Explore Certified Outdoor Classroom, CVPCCC plays a vital role in addressing the region’s child care shortage while maintaining high-quality care and education.



# Legacy Grants

The Black Hawk County Gaming Association has historically prioritized transforming places and spaces in Northeast Iowa by strategically investing in large, capital projects that enhance local infrastructure. Grants that receive a gift of over \$500,000 are called our Legacy Grants.

Project	Amount
City of Waterloo - Cedar Valley Sportsplex*	\$8,000,000
City of Waterloo - Gates and Byrnes Parks Transformation	\$6,500,000
Waterloo Development Corporation - Hard Courts Facility*	\$3,800,000
City of Waterloo - Riverloop Expo	\$2,800,000
Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity - Walnut Neighborhood	\$1,900,000
City of Waterloo - 4th Street Bridge Restoration*	\$1,800,000
City of Cedar Falls - Cedar River Recreation	\$1,500,000
City of Waterloo - Jefferson/Commercial Streetscape*	\$1,400,000
YWCA - Building Renovations	\$1,200,000
Hartman Reserve - Interpretive Center	\$1,200,000
Black Hawk County - E911 Radio Project	\$1,000,000
Grout Museum - Sullivan Brothers Iowa Veterans Museum	\$1,000,000
Northeast Iowa Food Bank - New Facility	\$1,000,000
City of Waterloo - Public Works Building	\$1,000,000
Hawkeye Community College - Van G. Miller Adult Education Center	\$1,000,000
University of Northern Iowa - UNI-Dome	\$1,000,000
Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity - Strategic Giving Initiative	\$1,000,000
Northeast Iowa Food Bank - From Hunger to Hope Capital Campaign	\$1,000,000
City of Waterloo - Riverfront Stadium Improvements*	\$930,000
Operation Threshold - New Facility	\$850,000
City of Waterloo - Mark's Park and Amphitheater	\$823,000
City of Waterloo - Convention Center	\$820,000
Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Center - Facility Improvements	\$750,000
City of Waterloo - University Avenue Enhancements	\$750,000
La Porte City - Main Street Redevelopment	\$750,000
City of Cedar Falls - Public Safety Building	\$750,000
City of Cedar Falls - Streetscape Phase 1	\$743,000
City of Waterloo - Byrnes Park Drainage Project	\$642,000
City of Waterloo - Young Arena Improvements	\$600,000
City of Waterloo - Lincoln Park Improvements	\$600,000
City of Cedar Falls - Details of the District Phase 2	\$574,800
Build Our Ballparks - Cedar River Youth Sports Complex	\$500,000
City of Waterloo - Waterloo Center for the Arts Youth Pavilion	\$500,000
University of Northern Iowa - Dome New Turf	\$500,000
University of Northern Iowa - Dome Scoreboard	\$500,000
City of Cedar Falls, UNI, Cedar Falls Schools - Tennis Complex	\$500,000
City of Waterloo - Boat House Enhancements	\$500,000
People's Community Health Clinic - Capital Project	\$500,000
Hawkeye Community College - Smart Automatic Training Alliance Center	\$500,000
City of Cedar Falls - Community Natatorium	\$500,000
House of Hope - Empowerment Center	\$500,000

\*Funding awarded through competitive grant cycle and/or Downtown Waterloo Reserves.

TOTAL LEGACY GRANTS  
\$51.8 million

# Outgoing Board Member Gifts

To recognize individuals who serve as volunteers on the BHC GA Board of Directors, outgoing members are able to make a grant to a local cause of their choice. In FY25, we would like to recognize these outstanding individuals for their contributions through their work with BHC GA and beyond in the Cedar Valley.


### Scott Becker

Designated gift to Don Bosco Catholic School Athletic Facilities




### Shawn Chestnut

Designated gift to Try Pie



### Stacy Van Gorp

Designated gift to the UNI Panther Pantry



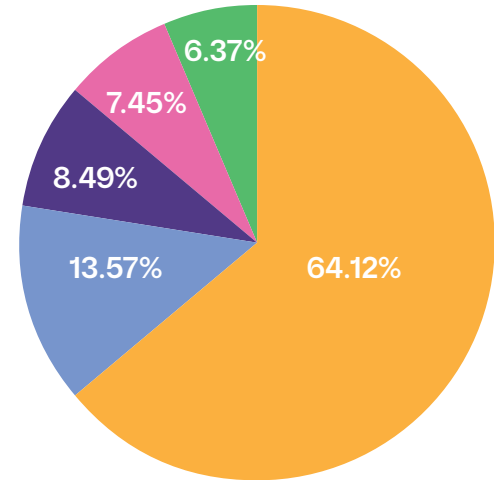
# Statement of Financial Position

Since our founding in 2007, the Black Hawk County Gaming Association has awarded over \$80 million to 719 projects in 8 counties and 55 cities.

Assets FY25	
Cash and cash equivalents:	\$5,141,002
Certificates of Deposit:	\$9,090,647
Investments held at WCF:	\$3,118,775
Accounts Receivable:	\$109,154
Net Leasehold Improvements:	\$24,228
Right-of-Use - Operating Lease	\$91,148
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$17,574,954</b>

Liabilities & Net Assets	
Grants Payable:	\$9,722,844
Operating Lease Liability:	\$91,148
<b>Total Liabilities:</b>	<b>\$9,813,992</b>
Net Assets, Unrestricted:	\$4,984,512
Board Designated Reserve - WDC:	\$2,776,450
<b>Total Net Assets:</b>	<b>\$7,760,962</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Assets:</b>	<b>\$17,574,954</b>

Breakdown of Awards FY08-FY25



- Community Development: 64.12%
- Human Services: 13.57%
- Education & Youth Development: 8.49%
- Arts & Culture: 7.45%
- Public Safety: 6.37%

Average Grant Size: \$115,552





114 E 4th Street, Suite 300  
Waterloo, IA 50703

[bhcgga.org](http://bhcgga.org)

## Comprehensive Systems, Inc. for New Hampton Group Home

### \$10,000 Concrete Work

The New Hampton Group Home, serving 12 individuals with special needs, is moving forward with phase two of its sidewalk and driveway replacement project with Comprehensive Systems, Inc. (CSI). Originally delayed by the pandemic, the initiative will address critical safety and accessibility concerns by replacing deteriorated concrete from 1987. Set to begin this fall, the project will enhance the home's functionality and appearance, improving daily life for residents, staff, and visitors alike.



“

We cannot thank BHCGA enough for understanding the importance of this project. It's vital for us to have a safe, accessible driveway. Your support and commitment to bettering the community is critical in Northeast Iowa.”

Sandy Harrington, Public Relations Coordinator  
Comprehensive Systems, Inc.

More stories inside