

## City of Decatur

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## So, what is the Stellar Communities program?

### ***The one-sentence answer***

The Stellar Communities program will award \$3-4 million in state grant funds in 2015 to two active Indiana communities to complete community capital improvement projects.

### ***The more detailed answer***

In 2011, the State of Indiana established the Stellar Communities program as a multi-agency partnership between the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) to assist and encourage rural communities in Indiana develop comprehensive community plans and projects. In 2015, the partnership added the support and resources of following agencies:

- Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- Indiana Finance Authority
- Indiana Office of Small Business and Entrepreneurship
- Indiana Office of Tourism and Development
- Indiana State Department of Health
- Serve Indiana

## What are “comprehensive community plan and projects”?

For example, the City of Decatur has included these community projects as part of its Stellar Communities application:

- Monroe Street pedestrian bridge/St. Mary's River Gateway
- Monroe Street sidewalks
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Street streetscape and public art improvements (sidewalks, curbs, lighting, landscaping, benches, etc., permanent art locations, etc.)
- Creative engagement center and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Lofts for artist/entrepreneur housing

## What is the goal of the Stellar Communities program?

Through this program, the State of Indiana is encouraging cities and towns to create long-term community improvement plans that emphasize collaboration between the public and private sectors.

## What does it mean to be a Stellar Communities finalist?

OCRA received 13 Stellar Communities letters of interest for the 2015 program, and Decatur was selected as a 2015 finalist in Division 2. The city was awarded \$5,000 from OCRA to complete its Strategic Investment Plan, which is the “big” phase of the application process. As a 2014 and first-time finalist, the city received \$10,000 from OCRA to complete the Strategic Investment Plan.

## Who are the 2015 finalists?

For the first time in 2015, there are two divisions in the Stellar Communities program. Division 1 consists of communities with a population of 6,000 or more, and Division 2 is designated for communities with a population of less than 5,999. The City of Decatur fits into Division 1, with a population of approximately 9,500.

### **Division 1**

Crawfordsville, Decatur, Marion

(Crawfordsville-2012 finalist; Decatur-2014 finalist; Marion-2011 and 2014 finalist)

### **Division 2**

Dunkirk, North Liberty

## **Who are other Stellar Communities?**

2014 – Huntingburg and Wabash

2013 – Bedford and Richmond

2012 – Delphi and Princeton

2011 – Greencastle and North Vernon

## **How much money is available?**

Approximately \$3-4 million in funding has been set aside in the 2015 program for eligible projects. And, tax credits are available as a leverage tool for community investment.

## **Stellar Communities calendar**

### **June 30**

**Strategic Investment Plan due to OCRA** – This will be the complete application to OCRA that includes details from budgets to drawings of each of our comprehensive community plan projects. Also included will be complementary projects, letters of support and community involvement/partners.

### **Week of July 20-31 (tentative)**

OCRA will be in Decatur for a site visit, where we will show off our plans for our identified projects

### **August at Indiana State Fair**

Stellar Communities winners will be announced – one from each division

### **September 2015**

Stellar Communities local celebrations for community winners

## **What is Decatur's history with the Stellar Communities program?**

Decatur was selected as one of six finalists for the 2014 Stellar Communities program, alongside Marion, Mount Vernon, Nashville and eventual winners Huntingburg and Wabash.

## **What complementary efforts are going on in Decatur?**

**Wetlands Nature Preserve project** – A donation of 35 acres will add one-half mile of trail/boardwalk and connect to current Rivergreenway trails.

**New City Hall** – Decatur moved into its new home in January 2015, with a \$1.5 million renovation.

**Monroe and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street greenspace** – The City of Decatur partnered with the Adams County Community Foundation to complete a community greenspace.

**Decatur Sculpture Tour** – In its fourth year, the tour will welcome more than 20 new sculptures to be unveiled on June 4, 2015.

**New police station** – The Decatur Police Department relocated to a new (and much larger) \$850,000 facility on 7<sup>th</sup> Street in March 2015.

**Downtown façade program** – The city is nearing implementation of a dollar-for-dollar matching program encouraging downtown building and business owners to update their facades.

**Capital Campaign** – Greater Decatur, the local group assisting the city in establishing long-term community priorities, will kick off a capital campaign in May 2015, seeking the private portion of the private-public partnership necessary to complete projects in the comprehensive community plan.

## **Decatur's community connections**

**Greater Decatur** - Greater Decatur is a group of citizens formed in 2012 under the direction of Mayor John Schultz to assist in establishing long-term priorities for the community. Areas of focus include redevelopment and revitalization; personal and business development and support; recreational opportunities and social connectivity; and community marketing.

**Additional community groups** – Winning with Wellness Adams County, Decatur Main Street, Decatur Cultural Connection, Connect to Careers, Decatur Sculpture Tour, Decatur Chamber of Commerce

## **Links**

[www.stellarindiana.org](http://www.stellarindiana.org)

[www.in.gov/ocra](http://www.in.gov/ocra) - Visit the Stellar Communities page