

CHAPTER 201
IOWA MAJOR EVENTS AND TOURISM PROGRAM

Chapter rescission date pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.7: 4/22/31

261—201.1(15G) Definitions.

“*Applicant*” means an eligible entity that is applying for financial assistance through the program.

“*Authority*” means the Iowa economic development authority created in Iowa Code section 15.105.

“*Board*” means the Iowa economic development authority board.

“*Entity*” means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 15G.101.

“*Event*” means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 15G.101.

“*Financial assistance*” means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 15G.101.

“*Matching funds*” means a cash contribution made by an entity applying for financial assistance.

“Matching funds” does not include any in-kind noncash contributions.

“*Program*” means the Iowa major events and tourism program administered pursuant to this chapter and Iowa Code sections 15G.101 through 15G.104.

“*Recipient*” means an entity that has been awarded financial assistance.

[ARC 0136D, IAB 3/18/26, effective 4/22/26]

261—201.2(15G) Eligibility.

201.2(1) In addition to the eligibility criteria in Iowa Code section 15G.103(2), an event must meet the following criteria to be eligible for financial assistance under the program:

- a. The event must be an event that has not previously been held in Iowa or has a quality or qualities that substantially distinguish the event from other events that have been held or could be held in the state.
- b. The event must be a ticketed event or require registration.
- c. The event will generate significant attendance from an out-of-state audience.
- d. The event is or will be held no more frequently than one time annually in Iowa.
- e. The hosting rights for the event were not secured by the entity applying for financial assistance before July 1, 2025.

201.2(2) To determine whether an event is a tourism-oriented athletic contest, convention, music festival, or art festival for the purposes of the program, the authority will consider the following factors:

- a. Whether the event encourages overnight stays.
- b. Whether the event contributes to the vitality of the host region’s tourism and economic development activity.
- c. Whether the marketing plan for the event targets an audience from more than 50 miles away from the event location.
- d. Whether the event elevates the profile of the state as a destination and encourages other events to seek Iowa communities as a host.

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261—201.3(15G) Preapplication. Entities interested in applying for financial assistance shall submit a preapplication to the authority in the form and content prescribed by the authority. The preapplication will be evaluated by staff for eligibility based on the criteria in Iowa Code section 15G.103(2) and rule 261—201.2(15G).

[ARC 0136D, IAB 3/18/26, effective 4/22/26]

261—201.4(15G) Application.

201.4(1) Entities that are invited to apply for the program based on their preapplication and staff review conducted pursuant to rule 261—201.3(15G) shall submit an application to the authority in the form and content prescribed by the authority. The application shall contain the following:

- a. An economic analysis that meets the requirements in Iowa Code section 15G.103(2) “a”(2).
- b. A marketing plan for the event that demonstrates to the satisfaction of the authority that the entity has the capacity and expertise to market the event appropriately.

c. Documentation of the entity's nonprofit status and documentation that the entity is established to promote economic development and tourism in an area.

d. The request for proposals or other comparable documents that the entity has responded to or will respond to in order to secure the event.

e. Documentation of the entity's ability to provide matching funds as required by Iowa Code section 15G.103(4) "b."

f. Documentation of the expenditures required as part of the entity's bid for the event.

201.4(2) An application must be for a minimum request of \$200,000.

201.4(3) An entity shall submit only one application for the program per bid process.

201.4(4) Authority staff will evaluate each application based on the criteria identified in Iowa Code section 15G.103 and the following criteria:

a. Whether the event would be new to Iowa or has been held in Iowa within the previous three years.

b. Whether receipt of financial assistance will be necessary for a successful bid or selection.

201.4(5) Following staff evaluation, eligible applications will be forwarded to the board for its final funding decision.

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261—201.5(15G) Eligible expenses.

201.5(1) Expenditures identified in Iowa Code section 15G.102(2) that are required as part of the entity's bid for an event are eligible for financial assistance.

201.5(2) Expenses for expenditures not directly related to the bidding and selection process are ineligible for reimbursement, including but not limited to:

a. Costs of developing or making permanent improvements to facilities, payroll or operating expenses.

b. Costs otherwise eligible but associated with a recipient-owned or recipient-controlled venue or asset.

c. Items that are purchased for resale.

d. Any item not required as part of the entity's bid for an event.

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261—201.6(15G) Administration.

201.6(1) Notification. The authority will notify successful applicants in writing of their approved application for financial assistance and prepare an agreement that reflects the terms of the financial assistance. The recipient must execute and return the agreement to the authority within 60 days of the transmittal of the final agreement from the authority. Failure to do so may result in termination of the financial assistance by the authority.

201.6(2) Disbursement. Financial assistance will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis. The authority will establish the frequency and amounts available for disbursement in the agreement entered pursuant to subrule 201.6(1).

201.6(3) Reporting requirements.

a. Each recipient shall submit an annual report that includes information about the status of the event and any information required by Iowa Code section 8.57.

b. A recipient shall submit information reasonably required by the authority to make reports to the authority's board, the governor's office, or the general assembly.

201.6(4) Remedies for noncompliance. If the authority finds that a recipient is not in compliance with program requirements or the terms and conditions of the agreement, the authority may employ any remedies it deems appropriate, including but not limited to the following:

a. Issue a warning letter stating that continued failure to comply with program requirements within a stated period of time will result in a more serious action.

b. Condition future financial assistance on correcting compliance issues.

c. Require that some or all of the financial assistance be remitted to the authority.

d. Elect not to provide future financial assistance to the recipient until appropriate actions are taken to ensure compliance.

e. Prohibit future awards of financial assistance.

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These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 15G.101 through 15G.104.

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