

CHAPTER 42
IOWA TOURISM GRANT PROGRAM

Chapter rescission date pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.7: 1/1/28

261—42.1(15) Definitions. For purposes of this chapter unless the context otherwise requires:

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

“*Collaborative application*” means an application in which multiple partners are providing monetary support for the project.

“*Head applicant*” means the applicant on a collaborative application that is both the recipient of the funds and the administrator of the project.

“*Marketing*” means planning for or implementing efforts to publicize a community, event or destination using a range of strategies, tools and tactics.

“*Meetings and events*” means the acquisition of regional or national tourism-related meetings and conventions or execution of local festivals or similar tourism events that positively impact local and state economies.

“*Project*” means a tourism-related marketing initiative, meeting or event that benefits both state and local economies.

“*Tourism*” means a site or event that attracts people from beyond a 50-mile radius or people who spend the night away from home to visit a site or event.

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261—42.2(15) Program description.

42.2(1) The authority will accept competitive applications for tourism-related projects in each fiscal year in which funding is available. The authority will award grants to projects based on the criteria described in subrule 42.4(1), and the authority will award grants to projects in a manner designed to prioritize those projects that provide the greatest benefit to state and local economies.

42.2(2) The authority will establish a maximum grant award per application and a minimum grant award per application for each fiscal year in which funding is available.

42.2(3) The authority will make awards based on the total amount of funding available each fiscal year. Funds will be awarded as reimbursement for expenditures that are directly related to the implementation of an eligible project.

42.2(4) An applicant may submit one application each fiscal year. If the application submitted by the applicant is a collaborative application, it will be counted as the head applicant’s application for the fiscal year.

42.2(5) An applicant that has received an Iowa tourism grant award in the prior fiscal year cannot submit an application for a substantially similar project in the following fiscal year. If an applicant does submit an application for a substantially similar project in the following fiscal year, the application will be deemed ineligible.

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261—42.3(15) Program eligibility and application requirements.

42.3(1) Eligibility. To be eligible under the program, an applicant shall meet all of the following requirements:

a. The applicant must be a tourism-related entity based in the state of Iowa, including a nonprofit or for-profit organization, city, county, or regional government or planning entity.

b. The applicant shall demonstrate an amount of local match equal to at least 25 percent of the amount of grant funds to be received by the applicant under the program. The local match shall be in the form of cash. Other state sources of funds shall not qualify as local match. The local match must be spent on eligible expenses as described in rule 261—42.6(15).

c. The applicant shall submit a completed application, including all of the information described in subrule 42.3(2).

d. The applicant shall submit the application on or before the application deadline established in subrule 42.3(3).

42.3(2) Application requirements. When submitting an application for grant funds under the program, an applicant shall include all of the following information:

a. The applicant's name, mailing address, email address, telephone number, contact person, and federal employer identification number. If the application is a collaborative application, the head applicant shall identify itself and provide the names of all partner applicants.

b. A detailed description of the project, including an explanation of how the project either markets tourism in Iowa or is a tourism-related meeting or event, and an explanation of how state funds will support the project.

c. Written documentation that the grant request is consistent with the cost of implementing the project. Examples of written documentation include but are not limited to advertising rate sheets, bids, quotes, and invoices.

d. Written documentation establishing the amount and source of the required local cash match.

e. Detailed information sufficient to enable the authority to accurately assess the impact and quality of the project described in the application. Such information shall include how the project is part of an overall plan to increase tourism locally and in the state of Iowa.

f. A description of the applicant's plan to recognize the authority's Iowa tourism office for its investment in the project.

g. If the applicant is an event, attraction, restaurant or lodging facility, then the applicant must provide verification that the information about the applicant has been updated at or added to the authority's website, www.traveliowa.com, within the 18 months preceding the application deadline. The authority may waive this requirement at its sole discretion.

42.3(3) Deadlines. The authority will only consider applications received on or before the applicable deadline. The deadline shall be 4:30 p.m. the first Monday in August of each fiscal year unless the authority, at its sole discretion, provides a different deadline for the submission of applications. The authority may provide a different deadline for the program as a whole, but the authority will not change the deadline at the request of any individual applicant. The authority will develop an application process and post all relevant application information, including deadline changes, on its Internet site at www.traveliowa.com.

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261—42.4(15) Application scoring and approval process.

42.4(1) Scoring criteria. The authority will not review or score an application unless the application meets the requirements and deadlines of rule 261—42.3(15). An application meeting the requirements and deadlines of rule 261—42.3(15) will be given a numerical score between zero and 100. The higher an application's numerical score, the more likely it will receive funding under the program. The criteria used to score the applications and the maximum number of points that may be attributed to each criterion are as follows:

a. Project description: 20 points. The applicant will explain the project, the time line for its creation and implementation and how state funds will support the project. The authority will view favorably information that clearly articulates the project, sets forth a reasonable time line for the project's creation and implementation, and fully describes how state funds will be used to support the project.

b. Economic impact and ability to promote tourism industry growth: 20 points. The authority will consider how the project supports the mission of the Iowa tourism office and is part of the applicant's broader marketing strategy to increase the economic impact of tourism locally and in the state of Iowa.

c. Sustainability: 10 points. The authority will view favorably applications that illustrate capacity to implement and sustain the project upon completion.

d. Need: 15 points. The authority will consider the financial need of an applicant and will allot more points to applications that demonstrate how the applicant has exhausted other areas of funding to support the project.

e. Innovation: 20 points. The authority will consider the innovative quality of an event or marketing initiative and will view favorably new events and new marketing initiatives or those events and marketing initiatives that are enhanced or distinctive in nature.

f. Budget: 10 points. The authority will view favorably budgets that are well-developed and relevant to the project and that provide documentation of planned project expenses.

g. Collaboration: 5 points. The authority will view favorably applications that either represent a collaboration of multiple entities or show the benefit of the project to multiple entities within the tourism industry, or both.

42.4(2) Approval process. The director of the authority will establish a review committee consisting of individuals affiliated with the Iowa tourism industry. The committee will score all completed applications in accordance with the criteria described in rules 261—42.3(15) and 261—42.4(15) and will use those scores to determine successful applicants. The committee may recommend partial funding of any or all applicants. If, after initially scoring all of the completed applications, the review committee is not able to allocate all the funds available, the authority may allow one or more additional rounds of applications to be submitted and scored. If any awards are rejected, the authority may allow one or more additional rounds of applications to be submitted and scored. For each additional round of applications, the authority will follow the same eligibility requirements and use the same scoring criteria as used in earlier rounds. The authority may accept as many rounds of applications for awards as it deems appropriate.

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261—42.5(15) Contract administration.

42.5(1) Notice of approval. The authority will notify successful applicants in writing of an approved request for funding. Such a notification may include the terms or conditions under which approval is granted.

42.5(2) Contract required. Each successful applicant that accepts the recommended award amount shall enter into a contract with the authority. The contract will describe the project that the applicant will institute as described in the application and will include the terms and conditions under which the grant funds will be disbursed. The contract will also include the terms and conditions under which grant funds must be repaid or penalties incurred in the event the grantee does not fulfill all obligations under the contract.

42.5(3) Contract amendments. All requests by a grantee for an amendment to the contract will require the approval of the director of the authority. The director will review each such request and approve or deny it. If a request is approved, the grantee and the director will execute a written amendment to the contract. Only a written amendment duly executed by both parties to the contract will be valid and binding.

42.5(4) Reports required. Each grantee shall submit a written report to the authority within 60 days of the end of the project completion date, as specified in the contract.

42.5(5) Record keeping. Each grantee shall maintain all records necessary for the verification and validation of the proper use of grant funds under the contract and shall submit such records to the authority upon request.

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261—42.6(15) Expenses, records, and reimbursements.

42.6(1) General. Each grantee shall at all times incur expenses and be reimbursed for such expenses by the authority only as described in this chapter or in a contract executed hereunder. The authority may deny reimbursement for any expenditure not directly related to the implementation of a tourism-related marketing initiative, meeting or event.

42.6(2) Eligible expenses. Only expenditures directly related to the implementation of a tourism-related marketing initiative, meeting or event will be reimbursed under the program. Examples of eligible expenses include the following:

a. The costs associated with all phases of the execution of marketing tactics and strategies, including planning and design and production of tools such as advertising, print materials, digital tools and exhibits for consumer-focused tradeshows.

b. The costs associated with acquiring a regional or national tourism-related meeting, including but not limited to bid fees, rights fees, sponsorships, payments to vendors, venue rental, and equipment rental.

c. The costs associated with executing a local event or festival, including but not limited to payments to vendors, payments to speakers or entertainers, venue rental, and equipment rental for new events or existing events in Iowa in order to augment the event.

42.6(3) *Ineligible expenses.* Expenses that are not directly related to the implementation of a tourism-related marketing initiative, meeting or event will be deemed ineligible. Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to vertical infrastructure; staff salaries and wages; equipment and software; solicitation efforts; lobbying fees; items that are purchased for resale; prizes given to participants or event/festival attendees; alcoholic beverages; internships; all travel, meal and lodging costs of applicant staff or the applicant's contractor; projects that receive funding from the authority's regional sports authority district program; marketing programs already subsidized by the authority including, but not limited to, advertising in the Iowa travel guide or participation in the cooperative partnership program; or a project of an Iowa tourism region.

42.6(4) *Required records and reimbursements.* A grantee shall submit any records requested by the authority as documentation of the expenditures incurred for implementation of the project. Such records may include invoices, original receipts, or check copies. If a grantee pays an expense using a credit card, the grantee shall submit a copy of a check register or bank statement indicating that the credit card invoice was paid. The authority will not reimburse expenses included on a nonitemized receipt.

42.6(5) *Repayments of certain funds.* If the authority reimburses a grantee for the cost of a refundable bid fee and the grantee is unsuccessful in the effort to win the right to hold that event, then the grantee shall return the amount of such reimbursement to the authority.

42.6(6) *Reallocation of funds.* If, at the time of a grantee's final reporting of expenses, the grantee cannot adequately document eligible expenses or documents an amount that is less than the awarded amount, the authority may award additional funds to other grantees, open additional rounds of applications, or revert the moneys to the general fund. If the authority awards additional funds to other grantees, such grantees shall submit documentation establishing how such funds will be expended, and the authority will execute contract amendments providing for the expenditure of the additional funds.

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