

Iowa Tourism Office 2025 Annual Report

The [Iowa Tourism Office](#) is the official voice of the state’s tourism industry. The office works collaboratively with Iowa's destinations and attractions to increase visitation, enhance economic impact of travel and market Iowa to potential visitors.

This report provides information to quantify and evaluate the effectiveness and economic impact of the tourism office’s activities related to advertising, promoting, placement and implementation of the economic development authority’s strategic plan for tourism and travel.

Economic Impact of Tourism

In Calendar Year 2024, tourism was responsible for \$7.5 billion in direct visitor spending in Iowa and a \$11.2 billion total economic impact. This level of visitor spending means nearly \$20.5 was spent every day by visitors to Iowa in 2024. Nearly 72,000 Iowans are employed by the tourism industry and tourism spending generated a total of \$1.2 billion in state and local taxes.

- Local Tax Revenue: \$543 million (6.9% growth year over year)
- State Tax Revenue: \$615 million (2.8% growth year over year)

Source: Tourism Economic Impact Report, 2025

Tourism Visitation Metrics

In FY25, an estimated 46.1 million people traveled to and within Iowa (a traveler is defined as a person who travels at least 50 miles from their home and stays at least two hours in a location). Approximately 45% of Iowa’s travelers were from out of state, 67.1% of whom spent at least one night in Iowa. Of Iowa’s out-of-state visitation, the top states include Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Missouri, South Dakota, Texas, Kansas, California and Colorado.

Percent of Total Visitation:

- Illinois – 18.9%
- Minnesota – 14.6%
- Nebraska – 11.2%
- Wisconsin – 8.2%
- Missouri – 8.2%
- South Dakota – 4.0%
- Texas – 3.5%
- Kansas – 3.4%
- California – 2.6%
- Colorado – 2.5%

Source: Tourism Economic Impact Report, 2025 and Arrivalist FY25 Visitation Dashboard

Marketing Results

Travel Iowa's FY25 integrated marketing campaign delivered strong economic returns and measurable growth across the full consumer funnel from awareness to bookings. The campaign generated an estimated \$8.1 million in hotel booking revenue between January and June 2025, tied to 36,100 tracked hotel bookings and 444,000 travel-related searches, for a **9.5x return on the state's FY25 travel media investment**.

Post-campaign surveys showed awareness and favorability have now increased for three consecutive years, while paid users' website engagement rate rose 32.6 percent over FY24, indicating that more prospects are taking key planning actions such as ordering a travel guide, signing up for e-newsletters, and researching trips on Travellowa.com.

To reach both new and returning visitors, Travel Iowa deployed a new creative platform, "Give it Time," across a diversified media mix that included connected TV/online video, Spotify, YouTube, Meta, Pinterest, Reddit, TripAdvisor, native, search, influencers and sponsored content.

These efforts produced more than 115.9 million impressions, 30.2 million video views, 536,594 site sessions and 36,100 hotel bookings during FY25, with especially strong video consumption on YouTube and high-quality traffic from search, Meta, Pinterest, TripAdvisor and Spotify.

Travel Iowa modernized its digital infrastructure in FY25 to support continued tourism growth and evolving traveler behavior with the launch of "Goldie," an on-site AI chatbot that offers personalized trip recommendations. Travel Iowa also implemented Adara tracking to directly connect media exposure to hotel bookings, refreshed seasonal content and imagery, introduced and tested a Travel Deals landing page and continued SEO and accessibility improvements.

Tourism Industry Strategic Plan

The Iowa Tourism Office led a range of new and ongoing initiatives during FY25 in support of the [Iowa Tourism Industry Strategic Plan](#), developed and announced in 2023.

Imperative 1: Unify industry around a shared long-term vision.

- Established new data partnerships and cooperative programs with AirDNA and Adara, providing deeper insights on Iowa's hotel and short-term rental markets.
- Introduced the new Choose Iowa agritourism digital passport, in partnership with Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS).
- Formed the Iowa Tourism Advisory Group to provide industry insight and guidance.
- Completed outreach to multiple special interest groups, including county conservation boards, county boards of supervisors, regional development groups and industry associations.
- Aligned Iowa Wine, Beer & Spirits Promotion Board marketing with the broader Travel Iowa campaign.
- Refreshed industry newsletter to include tourism trends, grant tips and tricks, data insights and additional partner news.

- Maintained data partnerships and co-ops with Tourism Economics, Arrivalist and STR.
- Expanded professional development opportunities for industry members through the Iowa Tourism Conference, quarterly Tourism Insider meetings and webinars.
- Strengthened partnerships with agencies and organizations, including IDALS, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Department of Transportation (DOT), Iowa Arts Council, Main Street Iowa and industry associations including the Iowa Hotel & Lodging Association, Iowa Restaurant Association and Iowa Travel Industry Partners.

Imperative 2: Amplify awareness of Iowa's tourism brand

- Launched Goldie, an AI-powered chatbot on traveliowa.com, earning national industry coverage.
- Expanded international marketing by hosting Latin America familiarization tour in partnership with Brand USA, securing a contract for an international bus tour group and engaging with international tour operators at IPW trade show.
- Strengthened Iowa's position in bicycle tourism through strategic partnerships with the Iowa Bicycle Coalition and RAGBRAI.
- Increased visibility at the Iowa State Fair, with and expanded booth presence in the Varied Industries Building and support of the Fair's inaugural drone show.
- Supported Bike Iowa's mobile bicycle tourism welcome center to promote visitor experiences at RAGBRAI and other adventure events.
- Integrated Travel Iowa's branding (via travel area iconography) into Iowa DNR and Iowa Museum Association marketing initiatives.
- Supported Iowa PBS' "Road Trip Iowa" television show.
- Developed a cooperative marketing strategy to amplify awareness of Travel Iowa and partner brands in out-of-state markets.
- Enhanced and maintained digital passports for state parks, scenic byways, wineries, breweries and distilleries.
- Remained active in national and international tourism organizations, including the U.S. Travel Association and Brand USA.
- Continued cross-agency content planning and development of a shared content calendar for industry buy-in.

Imperative 3: Ensure Iowa's tourism experience is welcoming to all.

- Supported partner programming with Wheel the World, a global initiative to develop and certify inclusive tourism destinations.
- Supported Iowa State University Extension's Agritourism Economic Impact report.
- Continued administration and evaluation of tourism-related grant programs, supporting partner initiatives.

Imperative 4: Ensure tourism readiness.

- Collaborated with the Iowa Museum Association to assess visitor readiness at Iowa museums.
- Partnered with ITIP to evaluate Iowa's group tour and meetings/convention sectors, guiding strategic growth.
- Continued the First Impressions for Tourism program, completing readiness assessments and action plans for five communities.

- Provided technical assistance to a statewide network of partner-operated visitor centers through the Partner Welcome Center Program.

Imperative 5: Drive an increase in long-term tourism investments.

- Provided strategic support for the implementation of the new \$4 million Tourism Major Events legislation.
- Launched the Elevate Iowa scholarship program, in partnership with ITIP, to fund partner participation in regional and national professional development opportunities.
- Continued the Meet in Iowa incentive program to attract meetings and conferences to Iowa.
- Sustained the Inspire Iowa program (\$75,000) to promote and market major arts and cultural events.
- Administered the \$300,000 Tourism Marketing Grant program to enhance partner marketing capacity.
- Continued support of Destination Iowa, funding large-scale tourism infrastructure projects.
- Continued support of Regional Sports Authority Districts to attract and expand sporting events statewide.