

Statewide Tourism Marketing Services & Efforts

FY2026 Annual Report

Requirement A: Professional-Quality Statewide Tourism Marketing Services

The Iowa Tourism Office invested \$1,937,825.97 in statewide tourism marketing services through grants, cooperative marketing programs, industry partnerships, destination promotion initiatives, international sales and marketing efforts, tourism research and measurement tools, marketing technologies, and industry education programs. These investments provided Iowa destinations, attractions, event organizers, tourism organizations, and hospitality partners with resources to expand marketing reach, improve visitor experiences, strengthen tourism readiness, access visitor and economic impact data, and attract new visitors, meetings, sporting events, and group travel business to communities across the state.

Key services included:

- Tourism grants supporting local destination promotion
- Tourism Marketing Co-op advertising program
- Crowdriff creator and content platform
- IowaFarmtoTable.org development
- International marketing through UK representation
- AI-powered visitor planning tools
- Tourism research and measurement systems

Effective Measures

During FY26, the Iowa Tourism Office expanded its statewide tourism marketing efforts through marketing grants to partners, strategic content creation, destination promotion and tourism technology investments. A total of 130 creator content shoots were conducted across Iowa, generating an estimated 1,700 or more photo and social media assets that can be utilized by Travel Iowa and tourism partners throughout the state. The office supported the production of 10 destination focused videos and developed over 480 outdoor recreation additional assets, including photography, video and audio content promoting Iowa's natural and recreational attractions. In addition, the Tourism Office funded 25 digital marketing grant projects that helped local destinations, attractions and tourism organizations enhance their marketing reach and visitor engagement efforts. To

support data driven decision making and improve visitor experiences, the office also maintained five statewide tourism technology platforms, providing partners access to tools for visitor analytics, economic impact measurement, content management, digital engagement and trip-planning

services. Collectively, these efforts increased statewide marketing capacity, expanded destination storytelling, strengthened partner support and enhanced Iowa's ability to promote itself as a competitive travel destination.

Requirement B: Hosting and Leveraging Tourism Advocacy Events

The Tourism Office supported statewide, national and international tourism advocacy through conferences, sponsorships, tourism industry education and destination recruitment events.

Major Events Leveraged

- IMEX America – Five Iowa destinations will be represented at the premiere international meetings convention in October 2026.
- ABA Marketplace – ITIP represented Iowa and 14 tourism partners participating by meeting with 1,033 tour operators and travel professionals in attendance, including 245 planners representing tour operator organizations; 32 scheduled one-on-one appointments and generated 58 additional planner interactions through booth conversations and lead-generation activities.
- TEAMS Conference – Event featured strong Iowa participation, with 11 destination representatives engaging attendees through the Team Iowa booth and partner booths. Iowa representatives conducted 40 pre-scheduled appointments with sports rights holders and event organizers, received 75 appointment requests, held 14 additional Reverse Marketplace conversations, and generated 15 quality booth discussions with sports rights holders. Outreach efforts included distributing 75 Iowa destination profile packets representing nine destinations, 100 Iowa-branded tradeshow bags, and 300 promotional items to prospective event organizers and visitors. A booth activation featuring Paralympic Gold Medalist Matt Stutzman also created additional opportunities to engage sports rights holders.
- IPW International Marketplace – More than 120 appointments and 30+ additional walk-up conversations with international tour operators, receptive operators, travel trade professionals and media representatives from 15+ countries. Partner participation included four DMOs and two hotels.

- Iowa State Fair – Maintained an 11-day presence at the Fair, including complimentary access to 44 industry partners to promote their destinations to one million Fairgoers.
- ILEAD – Supported industry association and leadership conference, providing professional development, networking and leadership exposure to more than 25 Iowa tourism industry members.
- International Association of Fairs & Expositions Conference – Supported international industry conference via sponsorship, held in Des Moines in spring 2026, providing broader brand awareness of Iowa as a destination.

Requirement C: Accessibility to Tourism Focused Organizations

A significant portion of FY26 investments directly supported tourism-focused organizations across Iowa. Programs were available to destinations of varying size and capacity, expanding access to marketing, research, content production and economic impact tools that many communities would not otherwise be able to procure independently.

- 32 tourism marketing grant awards
- 14 destination organizations received attribution and visitation analytics access
- 50 co-op creator partner content shoots completed
- 10 destination partners supported through video production co-op services

Organizations Served

- Convention & Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) / Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs)
- Chambers of Commerce
- Museums and historical societies
- Conservation organizations and county conservation boards
- Tourism attractions
- Agritourism operators
- Travel industry associations
- Cultural and arts organizations
- Counties and municipalities
- Event organizers and festivals
- Sports commissions and sports tourism organizations
- Hotels, lodging partners and hospitality businesses
- Restaurants, culinary organizations and food tourism partners
- Main Street organizations and downtown development groups

- Economic development organizations
- Parks and recreation agencies
- Outdoor recreation organizations and trails groups
- Fairs and fairground associations
- Regional planning organizations
- Visitor centers and welcome centers
- Nonprofit tourism and community development organizations

Requirement D: Public-Private Partnerships Supporting Iowa's Visitor Economy

The Tourism Office leveraged partnerships with private businesses, nonprofits, destination organizations, and statewide associations to promote Iowa as a travel destination.

Examples

- Partnerships with Iowa Travel Industry Partners supported meetings, sports and group travel marketing initiatives.
- Collaboration with the Iowa Restaurant Association advanced culinary tourism through the development of Iowa Farm to Table experiences and marketing resources.
- The Iowa Museum Association helped enhance visitor readiness and cultural tourism development across the state.
- The Iowa State Fair partnership provided a highly visible consumer marketing platform that reached more than one million attendees.
- Partnership with Catch Des Moines, Travel Dubuque, Think Iowa City, Cedar Rapids Tourism and Visit Quad Cities to support statewide representation at IMEX, expanding Iowa's presence in the meetings and conventions marketplace.
- Content creation efforts were strengthened through CrowdRiff's creator network and digital asset management platform, which generated and distributed tourism marketing content for statewide use.
- To measure effectiveness and economic impact, the Tourism Office maintained partnerships with Tourism Economics for economic impact reporting, Arrivalist for visitor tracking and visitation analytics, RateGain Adara for marketing attribution and return-on-investment measurement, and AirDNA for short-term rental and lodging intelligence.

Together, these partnerships leveraged both public and private resources to increase tourism promotion, improve industry collaboration, and provide the data necessary to evaluate tourism's contribution to Iowa's economy.

Legislative Effectiveness Metrics

Marketing Impact

- \$8.1 million in campaign-attributed hotel booking revenue
- 36,100 tracked hotel bookings
- 444,000+ travel-related searches tied to campaign activity
- 9.5 to 1 return on travel media investment
- 32.6% increase in website engagement year over year

Tourism Organization Support

- More than 25 local tourism marketing grant recipients funded
- Five communities participated in tourism readiness assessments
- Fourteen destination partners supported through attribution and visitation measurement tools
- Maintained complimentary access to statewide visitor tracking, hotel booking attribution, short-term rental intelligence and county-level impact systems for all tourism partners.
- Supported visitation analytics covering visitor origin markets, length of stay, overnight visitation, seasonality and destination performance.

Visitor Engagement

- Travel Iowa presence at the Iowa State Fair reached over one million attendees
- Tourism promotion supported through PBS, trade shows, digital tools, AI trip planning and visitor passport technologies

Economic Impact Infrastructure

The Iowa Tourism Office efforts in FY26 resulted in:

- 46.1 million visitors to Iowa
- \$7.5 billion in direct visitor spending
- \$11.2 billion in total economic impact
- Nearly 72,000 jobs supported by tourism
- \$1.2 billion in state and local tax revenue generated by visitors
- A full summary of Iowa Tourism Economic Impact is available [here](#).

Inspire Iowa Grants

Partner / Vendor / Awardee	Expense Amount	Contract Description
Cedar Rapids Symphony	\$80,000	Orchestra Iowa's collaboration with the Cedar Rapids Kernels and presentation of "Field of Dreams" with a live symphony orchestra in June 2025.
Dubuque County Historical Society	\$50,000	Ice Dinosaurs exhibit at the National Mississippi River Museum in spring 2025.
North Iowa Cultural Center & Museum	\$30,000	Surf Ballroom "Where Music Lives" grand opening event.
Wallace Centers of Iowa	\$14,500	Exhibit and events celebrating 100 th anniversary of Pioneer Seed and Henry A Wallace.

Meet In Iowa Grant

Partner / Vendor / Awardee	Expense Amount	Contract Description
Plains Anthropological Society	\$10,849.92	PAS-MAC Archaeological Conference, Iowa City, October 2025

Tourism Marketing Grants

Partner / Vendor / Awardee	Expense Amount	Contract Description
Actuate LLC dba core4	\$10,000	Core4 Gravel Earth Series 2026 Campaign
Amana Colonies Festivals Inc.	\$10,000	Festivals as Gateways – Digital Target to Grow Year-Round Tourism in the Amana Colonies
Ames Convention & Visitors Bureau dba Discover Ames	\$10,000	Beyond the Main Event: Away Game Edition
Buchanan County Tourism Bureau	\$8,400	Local by Nature: Buchanan County Marketing Campaign
Calhoun County Economic Development Corporation	\$10,000	Expect the Unexpected: Calhoun County Marketing
Centerville Chamber of Commerce dba PACT	\$10,000	Always in Season: Adventure in Appanoose
City of LeClaire, Iowa – Office of Tourism	\$10,000	Experience LeClaire: Where the River Meets the Road
City of Newton, Iowa	\$10,000	"Why Newton" Marketing Campaign
City of Onawa	\$10,000	Onawa: Eat, Play, Stay, Shop, Live

Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce	\$9,600	Clear Lake Led-Gen Campaign: Lake Life, Delivered
Council Bluffs CVB / Pottawattamie County Tourism Committee	\$10,000	2026 Pottawattamie County Winter Travel Marketing Campaign
County of Marion, Iowa	\$10,000	Lake Red Rock: Iowa's Most Accessible Outdoor Playground
Dubuque Area CVB dba Travel Dubuque	\$10,000	For Places Like This Website Builder + Launch Campaign
Eastern Iowa Lutheran Bible Camp Association, Inc. dba Camp Ewalu	\$9,600	Wild Driftless Adventure Race: Experience Iowa as Never Before Campaign
Fairfield Iowa CVB dba Visit Fairfield	\$5,000	Fairfield Future-Ready: AI-Powered Destination Marketing
Friends of Dubuque County Conservation	\$10,000	Rediscover the Mississippi: Adventures in the Upper Miss River
Garner Chamber of Commerce	\$10,000	Discover Garner 2026: Duesey Days & North Iowa Weekends
Glenwood Area Chamber of Commerce dba Mills County Chamber of Commerce	\$10,000	See Yourself in Mills County – Visit Mills County Video Upgrade
Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden	\$6,000	Come & Glow with Us Digital Ad Campaign
Hoover Presidential Foundation	\$10,000	Big Adventures Start in Small Places
Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation	\$10,000	Bird Friendly Iowa – Community Tourism Advancement
Jackson County Area Tourism Association	\$9,300	Jackson County, Iowa Community Calendar
Lee County Fair	\$5,600	Lee County Fair Website
Mahaska Chamber & Development Group	\$9,600	Website Enhancements
Main Street Lansing – Main Street Matters, Inc.	\$10,000	Bridge the Gap 2026 Marketing and Outreach Campaign
Pella Convention & Visitors Bureau	\$8,000	Four Seasons, One Pella
Pocahontas Economic Development	\$8,700	Coloring Pocahontas County: Life Through a New Lens, Life Size Kaleidoscope
Ringgold County Development Corporation Inc.	\$10,000	Discover Ringgold County

The Shrine of the Grotto of the Redemption	\$10,000	Discover the Peace & Tranquility of the Grotto
Turkey River Cultural Center	\$10,000	Explore Winneshiek: Culture & Heritage Tourism Video Campaign
Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission	\$10,000	Northeast Iowa: Your Next Adventure, Your Next Home
Winneshiek County Development Inc.	\$10,000	Discover Decorah: SEO+Content Amplification Campaign

FAM Tour Grant

Partner / Vendor / Awardee	Expense Amount	Contract Description
Iowa Travel Industry Partners (ITIP)	\$25,000	Industry grants for hosting FAM (familiarization) tours (awarded and distributed by ITIP)

Industry Education & Professional Development

Partner / Vendor / Awardee	Expense Amount	Contract Description
Iowa State University Extension	\$63,497.15	First Impressions Tourism Readiness Program (CY2025 contract expenses; no 2026 expenses)
Iowa Travel Industry Partners	\$46,000	Elevate Iowa professional development scholarship program.

Public/Private Partnerships

Partner / Vendor / Awardee	Expense Amount	Contract Description
Iowa Travel Industry Partners (ITIP)	\$146,500	Marketing tactics to niche travel audiences (meetings, sports, groups) including web, digital marketing, publications and tradeshow.
Iowa Travel Industry Partners (ITIP)	\$40,000	TEAMS tradeshow sponsorship
Iowa Travel Industry Partners (ITIP)	\$3,624.80	Freight for ABA Tradeshow
Iowa Travel Industry Partners	\$2,000	ILEAD event sponsorship
Iowa State Fair	\$75,000	Champion sponsor providing partners no-cost exhibit space/time at Iowa State Fair in Varied Industries building, marketing/branding in Thrillville area.

Xtreme Exhibits	\$66,179.10	Travel Iowa exhibit booth shipping, setup, storage and maintenance fees for four tradeshow (TEAMS, ABA, IPW and Iowa State Fair)
Iowa Restaurant Association	\$55,875	Development and maintenance of IowaFarmtoTable.org website and chef experiences
Iowa Museum Association	\$50,000	Development of museum visitor readiness program
Catch Des Moines	\$30,000	Sponsorship of five partners attending IMEX (meetings and conventions) tradeshow, representing the state
Bike Iowa LLC	\$12,500	Development and maintenance of Bike Iowa/Travel Iowa mobile welcome center trailer.
Emerge Marketing Solutions LLC	\$5,000	Sponsorship of Evolution of the Heartland agritourism brochure
International Association of Fairs & Expositions	\$1,000	Sponsorship of organization's annual conference, held in Des Moines.
Iowa Bicycle Coalition	\$2,500	Sponsorship of economic impact of cycling and trails study, phase 2.

Research

Partner / Vendor / Awardee	Expense Amount	Contract Description
Tourism Economics	\$78,000	State and county tourism visitation, spending, economic impact data
Arrivalist	\$120,000	State, county and city geolocation visitation data – platform and data co-op licenses.
Rategain Adara, Inc	\$90,000	Hotel and flight booking data on marketing exposures, providing ROI data
AirDNA	\$20,899	Short-term rental lodging data across the state and data licensing for partners

Iowa Tourism Marketing Co-Op

Partner / Vendor / Awardee	Expense Amount	Contract Description
FleishmanHillard	\$271,338	Program to buy down digital advertising costs for tourism partners, directing visitor traffic to partner websites and assets.

International Marketing

Partner / Vendor / Awardee	Expense Amount	Contract Description
US Travel Association	\$42,800	IPW – International Sales & Marketing Tradeshow
Cellet UK	\$21,315	PR and marketing representation in the UK and Ireland

Marketing Innovation

Partner / Vendor / Awardee	Expense Amount	Contract Description
Crowdriff	\$124,000	Crowdriff Creators program and UGC (user generated content) listening platform for gallery creation, digital asset management
Laura Formanek Creative LLC	\$17,148	Farm to Table Videography & Photography
Matador Ventures, Inc.	\$42,500	Guidegeek AI Chatbot License