

The Sioux City Art Center unveiled Razzle Dazzle during the 30th anniversary of its annual ArtSplash arts festival. Visiting artist Amanda Browder worked with a team of volunteers over the course of a year to collect and stitch together textiles from hundreds of community members into a gigantic fabric mural representing the Siouxland area.



IOWA TOURISM OFFICE AND IOWA ARTS COUNCIL

2024 JOINT ANNUAL REPORT

MARCH 2025



traveliowa.com



Introduction

Tourism and the arts are two powerful forces that shape Iowa's culture, drive local economies and foster community connection. As travelers seek unique, immersive experiences, they are increasingly drawn to destinations rich in artistic expression, from galleries and performances and public art installations and festivals.

In turn, the arts benefit from the exposure tourism provides, creating opportunities for artists to share their work with a broader audience and for communities to showcase their cultural heritage. The connection of tourism and the arts is a key driver of Iowa's economy.

Fiscal year 2023 was the first year during which both the Iowa Tourism Office and Iowa Arts Council were under the Iowa Economic Development Authority. These complementary teams are pleased to present a joint annual report for Fiscal Year 2024.

Boone and Scenic Valley Railroad

Section 1: Iowa Tourism Office

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 travelers.



Economic Impact of Tourism

In Calendar Year 2023, tourism was responsible for a record \$7.3 billion in direct visitor spending in Iowa and a \$10.9 billion total economic impact. This visitor spending means nearly \$20 million was spent every day by visitors to Iowa in 2023. Almost 71,000 Iowans are employed by the tourism industry and tourism spending generated a total of \$1.1 billion in state and local taxes.



\$507 million
local tax revenues
(2.7% growth)



\$599 million
state tax revenues
(4.7% growth)

Source: Tourism Economic Impact Report, 2023

Marketing Campaign Overview

In FY24, the Iowa Tourism Office was legislatively appropriated:

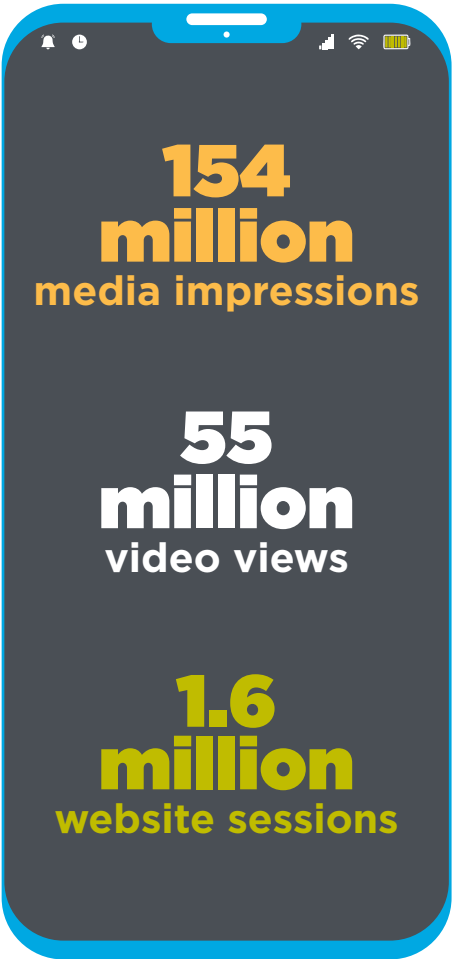
- \$3.444 million from gaming, tax receipts from alcoholic beverage sales and the general fund for marketing, operations and stakeholder support, including tourism marketing grants and the marketing co-op program
- \$1.1 million from the general fund for marketing, advertising and strategic planning
- \$2 million from tax receipts from alcoholic beverage sales to award contracts to conduct statewide tourism marketing services and efforts

Additionally, the Iowa Tourism Office received a grant through the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) to support tourism marketing and advertising. Through FY24, \$3.8 million, 72% of the total grant has been utilized.

The Iowa Tourism Office, utilizing the Travel Iowa brand, launched the Soul of Iowa 2.0 campaign in FY24. This campaign was an extension of the previous marketing campaign that showcased drone "fly throughs" of Iowa destinations. This campaign extension was primarily funded by the federal EDA grant.

The Soul of Iowa 2.0 campaign featured 40 Iowa communities and more than 100 different attractions, parks, restaurants and hotels, urging potential visitors to “see Iowa from a new perspective.” More than 150 video assets were developed that included a series of acrobatic drone fly throughs , video content partnerships with Matador Network® and Dotdash Meredith/Midwest Living and assets developed by a group of 10 social media influencers.

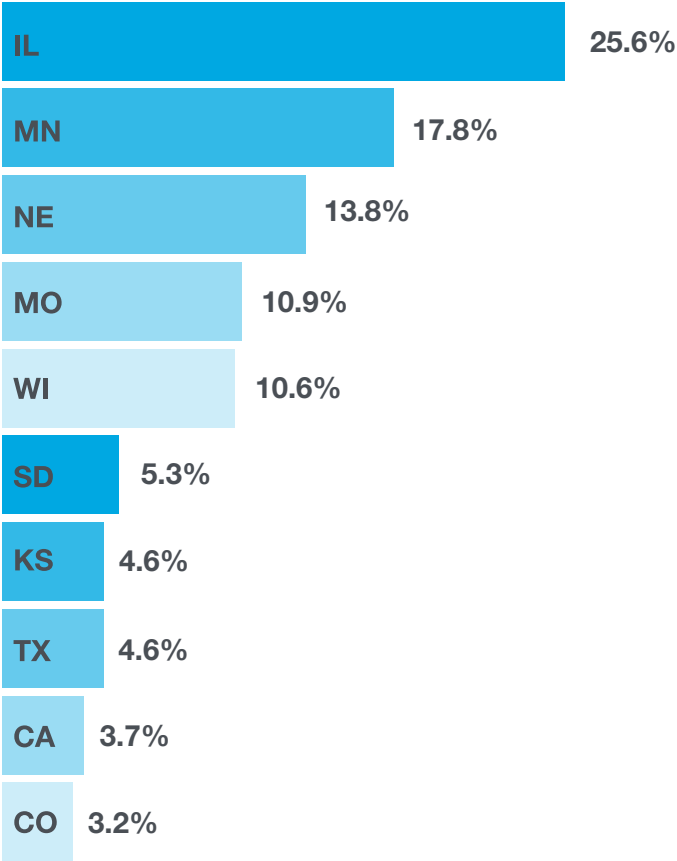
- Campaign Dates: April 1, 2024 – October 31, 2024
- Paid Channels: Connected TV, Meta platforms, Pinterest, YouTube, Programmatic Video and Display, Digital Display, Search Engine Marketing, and Reddit
- Results:



Visitation Results

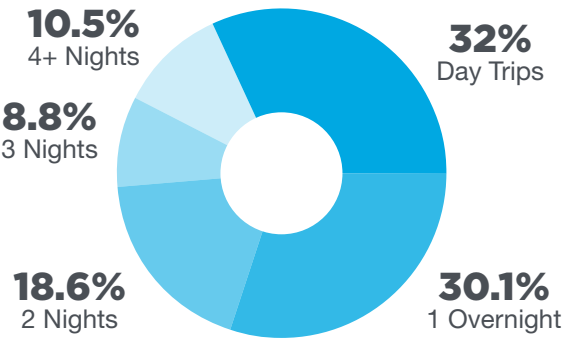
In FY24, 46.1 percent of Iowa’s travelers were from out of state. Of Iowa’s out-of-state visitation, the top states include Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska, Missouri, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Kansas, Texas, California and Colorado.

Trip Volume by Top Origin States



When visitors come from out of state to Iowa, 68 percent of them stay at least one night in the state, a 2.8% growth year over year.

Visitor Length of Stay



Source: Arrivalist, FY24 Visitation Dashboard

Stakeholder Engagement

In 2022, the Iowa Tourism Office worked with the tourism industry to develop a five year tourism strategic plan for the state. The strategic planning process resulted in the development of five imperatives for the tourism industry:

1. Unify the industry around a shared long-term vision
2. Amplify the awareness of Iowa's tourism brand
3. Ensure that Iowa's tourism experience is welcoming to all
4. Ensure tourism readiness
5. Drive an increase in long-term tourism investments

Several milestones and action steps have been taken since the launch of the strategic plan in 2023. The following are the milestones and projects that were completed in FY24 on behalf of Iowa tourism stakeholders:

- Completion of the Iowa Visitor Profile study (Ensure Iowa's tourism experience is welcoming to all)
 - The Iowa Visitor Profile study, which provides demographic and psychographic research about Iowa's travelers, was completed and released to stakeholders in March 2024. The Visitor Profile Study is available upon request.
- Completion of the Iowa Sports Tourism report (Drive an increase in long-term tourism investments)
 - In partnership with the Iowa Travel Industry Partners (iTIP), the Iowa Sports Tourism report was completed and released in June 2024. This report provides a competitive analysis and recommendations for Iowa's sports tourism sector and is available upon request.
- Launch of international marketing programming and Travel Iowa presence at IPW tradeshow (Amplify awareness of Iowa's tourism brand)
 - The Iowa Tourism Office began a paid marketing partnership with Brand USA to provide Iowa visibility in international marketing efforts. The Iowa Tourism Office also led a coalition of industry partners at the IPW international tourism tradeshow for the first time since 2016.
- Creation and implementation of the Tourism First Impressions program (Ensure tourism readiness)
 - The Tourism First Impressions program, a comprehensive community assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses of Iowa destinations through the lens of a first-time visitor, was launched in March 2024 for communities with populations of under 10,000. Corning and Maquoketa were selected as the FY24 program communities.
 - Support unified Iowa presence at group, meeting/convention and sports sales tradeshows (Unify the industry around a shared long-term vision; Amplify awareness of Iowa's tourism brand)
- Funding was awarded to iTIP to execute a comprehensive niche audience campaign focused on the recruitment of national meeting planners, sporting event rights holders and group tour operators .
 - Continuation of monthly outreach efforts to tourism stakeholders (Unify the industry around a shared long-term vision)
- The Iowa Tourism Office hosted at least one engagement opportunity each month in FY24, open to all industry members. These included six virtual webinar events, four Tourism Insider Meetings held at Pella, Mason City, Decorah and Sioux City, the Iowa Tourism Conference and an additional special event "Tourism Day at the Iowa State Fair."

- Continuation of Meet in Iowa grant program (Drive an increase in long-term tourism investments)
 - The Meet in Iowa grant program continued to incentivize and increase mid-week meeting and convention sales and room nights, specifically for conferences and conventions coming in from out of state. Funding in FY24 supported 12 new-to-Iowa events with a \$112,000 investment, adding nearly 1,600 room nights to hotel business.
- Creation of the Inspire Iowa grant program (Drive an increase in long-term tourism investments)
 - With the move by the Iowa Arts Council (IAC) move to the Iowa Economic Development Authority, the Iowa Tourism Office and IAC collaborated for the first time on the Inspire Iowa grant program, providing incentive funding to bring showcase arts and culture events and exhibits to Iowa. In FY24, six projects were awarded a total of \$250,000.
 - › Orchestra Iowa: Orchestra Iowa Presents Field of Dreams
 - › Figge Art Museum: Walter Wick: Hidden Wonders!
 - › National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library: Bringing Alphonse Mucha to Iowa
 - › Des Moines Art Center: Firelei Baez Exhibition
 - › Museum of Danish America: Danish Ceramics: Beyond Blue and White
 - › Art Center Association of Sioux City: Razzle Dazzle at ArtSplash



Marshalltown IGP Meeting

George Daley Community Auditorium's Youth Theatre performs The Hobbit

Section 2: Iowa Arts Council

The Iowa Arts Council has been designated by the State of Iowa to leverage funding from the state and the National Endowment for the Arts to strengthen opportunities for Iowans to create, learn and participate in the arts.

Economic Impact of the Arts

The results of the sixth Arts & Economic Prosperity study (AEP6) were released in the fall of 2023. Nearly 6,000 Iowans and 565 nonprofit organizations, representing 10 Iowa communities and regions, participated in the study between May 2022 and June 2023. The study and related economic data show that:

Arts and cultural production contributed \$5.0 billion to Iowa's economy and employed 41,810 Iowans.¹ Approximately 30 percent of those employed are supported by the nonprofit arts industry (12,441).²

- The value of the arts on the economy in Iowa grew 8.4 percent year over year, outpacing the growth of arts across the country by 7.7 percent.¹

\$705 million in economic activity was reported in 2022.²

- \$427.7 million in spending by arts and cultural organizations
- \$277 million in spending by visitors to arts and cultural organizations

This spending generated a total of \$115 million in state and local tax revenue.²



\$36 million
local tax revenues



\$43 million
state tax revenues

Beyond economic factors, the arts provide additional benefits to Iowans in unifying communities, enhancing individual well-being and improving academic performance of K-12 students.

¹Bureau of Economic Analysis Arts & Cultural Production Satellite Account Report, 2022

²Arts & Economic Prosperity 6: The Economic and Social Impact Study of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences in the State of Iowa, 2023

Stakeholder Engagement

Between March and August 2024, the Iowa Arts Council engaged more than 550 Iowans through public meetings, surveys and interviews to fulfill a statutory requirement to gather input about arts and cultural programs in the state ([Iowa Code, Ch. 15.108.pdf](#)).

The following themes emerged from the research:

1. Talent attraction and retention

Iowa arts, civic and business leaders see arts and cultural activities as critical to efforts to recruit workers and families to Iowa.

2. Arts education and career readiness

Iowa leaders view education as a key driver for economic and workforce development and believe the arts prepare students with the skills to succeed in any career. Survey respondents consider work-based learning programs as a strength for Iowa and an opportunity for the creative sector.

3. Rural vitality through the arts and creativity

Rural communities have embraced a variety of arts projects and activities in recent years. Initiatives that support continued integration of the arts and culture into community visioning, strategic planning, business development efforts are key.

4. Artists and creative business growth

Artists and creative businesses enrich Iowa communities and local economies. Programming that improves access to capital for artists and involves artists in civic efforts is an opportunity, especially in rural communities.

5. Creative infrastructure

Iowans seek more flexible and repurposed spaces to create and perform, as well as dedicated workspaces for artists and creative businesses.

6. Creative sector impact

The creative economy in Iowa is a vibrant, connected ecosystem that should be integrated within broader strategies to drive economic development efforts.

7. Philanthropy and arts nonprofits

Iowa foundations and arts nonprofits are investing in transformational place-based arts and culture projects. Continued support of these efforts is vital.

8. Public-private partnerships

Iowans view favorably the state's role in convening, partnering and facilitating arts and culture activities. Leveraging state investment with private philanthropy is strongly desired.



ARTapalooza Cedar Falls
credit: Cedar Falls Community Main Street Facebook

Strategic Priorities

The Iowa Arts Council supports and advances Iowans' priorities for the arts with the resources it manages. In FY24, this goal was accomplished through three central priorities.

Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony Youth Concert series

Priority #1: Build an arts infrastructure that reaches every corner of our state.

In FY24, the Iowa Arts Council made 227 grant awards to cities, nonprofits, schools and individual artists, totaling nearly \$2.25 million and benefiting 60 communities across the state.

By the Numbers:

7,740 Iowa artists
directly involved with funded organizations and activities

3,127 Iowa jobs
supported in part by funded organizations and activities

11,898 Iowa volunteers
engaged by funded organizations and activities

3.57 million visits and engagements
with funded organizations and activities

The Iowa Arts Council also developed new tools and opportunities for the arts in Iowa:

- Launched the **Iowa Artist Directory** in partnership with ARTSwork, connecting Iowa artists with paid opportunities.
- Engaged more than 100 leaders at the annual **creative community development meeting** for peer learning and exchange of ideas in Marshalltown.

- Hosted the **Iowa Fine Arts Education Summit**, co-presented by the Iowa Alliance for Arts Education. Held seven **Regional Arts Forums**, engaging 500+ Iowans in discussions about how the arts can help tackle important civic issues.
- Invested in creative projects to remove barriers to arts participation, including the **Fresh Films' Career Path Program** in Scott County and **Bienvenidos** a Des Moines.

Priority #2: Grow a sustainable and thriving ecosystem for the arts in Iowa.

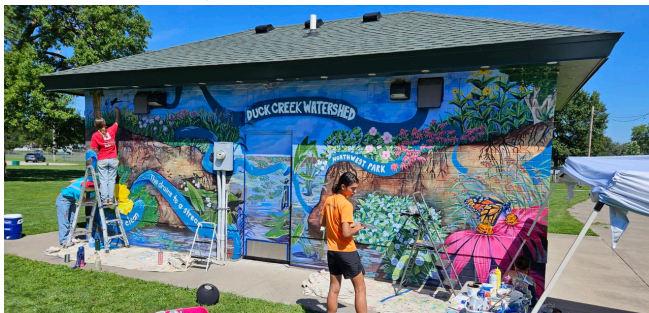
The Iowa Arts Council supports professional development activities for Iowa artists and leaders of cultural organizations.

- The **Cultural Leadership Partners** program and **Cultural Capacity Building** programs provided leadership development programming to more than 80 organizations.
- The **Iowa Cultural Leadership Cohort** grew to include 33 organizations.
- The **Iowa Artist Fellowship** and **Career Development Retreat** helped 21 artists increase their professional skills in planning, marketing and business development.

Priority #3: Support and champion Iowa's creative economy.

The Iowa Arts Council invested in creative projects that enhance the cultural identity of communities and districts.

- In partnership with Quad City Arts, the IAC sponsored an event in which students designed and created **murals along the Duck Creek Parkway trail system** to increase awareness and stewardship of local watersheds.



- Elkader held the 10th anniversary of its **Art in the Park Fine Art Festival**, which has fueled regional tourism in the area by hosting over 20,000 visitors annually.



- The annual **Farm to Film Fest** in Washington's historic downtown was founded to honor the city's rich cinematic heritage, including the historic State Theatre and Brinton Films collection.



Produce Iowa

Produce Iowa, the state office of film and media production within the Iowa Arts Council, promotes and facilitates film and media projects and programs to create a supportive environment for filmmaking in Iowa. The office offers grants, resources and tools that support Iowa filmmakers, screenwriters and a network of nearly 20 film festivals and works with higher education and industry partners to provide ongoing learning opportunities for the Iowa film industry.

Produce Iowa's Greenlight Grants empower Iowa filmmakers to take projects from script to screen and develop the industry in the state.

Since the program's launch, Greenlight Grants have directly supported:



19

film and media projects



196

Iowa jobs



\$673,082

Iowa jobs



Visit opportunityiowa.gov/arts-culture for more information.