

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TO HOST 2027 IOWA DOWNTOWN CONFERENCE

The Iowa Downtown Resource Center is seeking proposals from communities in Iowa to host the 2027 Iowa Downtown Conference on August 3 & 4, 2027. The anticipated attendance for the two-day conference is 250.

IOWA DOWNTOWN CONFERENCE BACKGROUND

For 37 years, the Iowa Downtown Conference has been the premier statewide annual conference for professionals and volunteers involved in preservation based downtown revitalization. The format provides attendees with educational and networking opportunities to acquire information about the latest strategies in commercial district revitalization.

SCOPE

- **DATES:** The 2027 Iowa Downtown Conference will be two days (tentatively August 3 & 4, 2027). General Sessions, concurrent breakout sessions, lunch meetings and tours will be held both days. There will be an exhibit hall that is open on Tuesday only, and a networking event that evening.
- **LOCATION:** The 2027 Iowa Downtown Conference will be held in Iowa. Conference meeting and reception facilities must be located downtown. Preference will be given to locations in central and western Iowa for 2027.
- **LODGING:** Adequate overnight accommodation must be available within the six miles of the conference site to secure a block of rooms for conference participants (75 on Monday, August 2/150 on Tuesday, August 3).
- **FACILITIES:** Possible locations could include convention centers, hotels with meeting space, museums, banks, theaters, fraternal halls, colleges, restaurants, churches and or libraries.
 - Conference headquarters (registration, refreshment breaks and exhibit area) must be situated together in a centrally located facility.
 - Space is needed for 20 + exhibit booths (Tuesday only). Some exhibitors may require access to electricity.
 - The general assembly room for plenary sessions should have seating capacity for a minimum of 250 attendees.
 - Three rooms with a seating capacity of 75+ are required for breakout sessions. It is convenient if the assembly and breakout session rooms are in the same building. We would consider multiple sites if they are all located within a one to two block radius.
 - All facilities must be ADA accessible.
 - Access to all conference sites the day before the conference in order to set up is required.
 - Audiovisual capabilities are required in the general assembly room and in all breakout rooms (large view screens, speaker systems and lavalieres). Adequate number of tables and chairs, pipe and drape for the exhibit hall and access to a copy machine (on or offsite) during the conference are needed.
- **TOURS:** The Conference will include tours coordinated by the host community. These could include a walking tour of the commercial district, upper story housing, streetscape project, adaptive use projects, historic tax credit projects, historic preservation projects, or downtown districts in communities within a 20-minute drive time.
- **FOOD AND BEVERAGES:** Refreshments should be available during registration and breaks. There will be a need for a meal(s) to be catered onsite. Information on nearby restaurants must be provided for attendees.
- **NETWORKING ACTIVITIES:** The Conference will include two activities for attendees to meet and socialize:
 - Hosts are asked to make the arrangements for a gathering on Monday evening that is held at a restaurant / pub(s). Participants are typically responsible for their own costs. (Est. attendance 75 - 100)
 - Hosts are asked to coordinate a reception on Tuesday evening. Light refreshments are recommended as we want attendees to support the local restaurants following the reception. Depending upon the venue and entertainment, reception to last 1 ½ to 2 hours. (Est. attendance 150)

CONTENT

Your proposal should include the following:

- Contact information for a point person who will be responsible for local arrangements.
- A statement of interest from the sponsoring organization for hosting the 2027 Iowa Downtown Conference, including the reasons you believe your community is the best location for the conference.
- A map detailing the location of the proposed conference site(s), lodging and parking.
- Information from the lodging facilities: availability, number of rooms, rates and proximity to the conference site.
- List of restaurants in the downtown area that are open for lunch.
- List of caterers who could provide lunches for \$15-\$20 per person.
- Sufficient information regarding the community's ability to host the 2027 Iowa Downtown Conference based on the following criteria:
 - Community must be in Iowa. Preference will be given to communities in Central or Western Iowa.
 - Proposed conference site must be in a downtown. Preference will be given to proposals utilizing historic properties in the central business district.
 - Adequate lodging facilities within a six (6) mile radius of the conference site must be available. Preference will be based on affordability and quality.
 - Rental fees for the proposed conference facilities. Preference will be given to communities willing to provide the venues at no or reduced cost.
 - Proposed plan for refreshments during registration and breaks. Preference will be given to proposals willing to find sponsors to cover the cost of the service.
 - Audio/visual equipment, tables and chairs for all rooms must be available. Preference will be given to communities able to provide the equipment at no cost.
 - Proposed idea for the Monday and Tuesday evening social events. Preference will be given to communities willing to find sponsors and host the social networking activities.
 - Number of paid registrants from the community committed register to attend the conference at reduced "host" rate. Preference will be given to communities willing to commit to a minimum of fifteen (15) attendees.
 - Number of volunteers available to assist as needed.

FORM

- Proposals must be submitted online at https://form.jotform.com/SNWatson/application_Host2027_IADTConference
- **Proposals are due May 1, 2026.**

QUESTIONS? PLEASE CONTACT:

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