



IOWA TOURISM AWARD GUIDELINES

The Iowa Tourism Office is proud to host the annual Iowa Tourism Awards. This year's awards will recognize the amazing work and innovation by Iowa's outstanding tourism organizations that have positively contributed to the experience of our visitors. These awards represent the highest honor given for tourism in Iowa. Award winners will be announced on Wednesday, March 20, during the 2024 Iowa Tourism Conference.

NOMINATION GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

- Nomination form links below
 - [Excellence in Visitor Experience](#)
 - [Excellence in Marketing](#)
- Nominations received in an incorrect category may be moved to a more appropriate category.
- All nominations must be submitted online.
- Deadline for nominations is 4 p.m. Friday, February 2, 2024
- Incomplete submissions will not be judged.
- Self-nominations are accepted.
- Note: If you and the person/organization nominated for an award are registered to attend the Iowa Tourism Conference, you will not be notified if your nominee is selected to receive an award. If you and/or your nominee are not registered to attend the conference, we will contact you to discuss attending.

ELIGIBILITY

The Iowa Tourism Awards are open to all individuals, private businesses, for-profits and nonprofit organizations offering a tourism product or service in Iowa. All entries must promote tourism to or within Iowa. Events or initiatives nominated for consideration need to have occurred between January 1, 2023, and January 31, 2024. Please note: 2023 award winners are not eligible to enter in the same or similar category in 2024.

Each of the following awards (except for the People's Choice Award) will be awarded to one rural and one metro winner. Rural winners must be from a city with a population of 10,000 or less or a county that is among the 33 least populated in Iowa based on the latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Metro winners must be from a city with a population of more than 10,000 or a county that is among the 66 most populated in Iowa based on the latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The following categories demonstrate excellence in supporting Iowa tourism marketing.

- **Outstanding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative.** Honors excellence in diversity, equity and inclusion advancements.
 - 2023 Winner: Iowa State Fair Sensory-Friendly Morning, Des Moines (Metro)
- **Outstanding Marketing Collaboration.** Honors a collaborative partnership between tourism organizations.
 - 2023 Winners: Cedar Falls Tourism & KWWL (Metro); Tour O'Brien County (Rural)

- **Outstanding Niche Market Initiative.** Honors excellence in a tourism initiative targeted to any niche audience such as green/sustainable efforts, natural resources, sporting events, the arts, etc.
 - 2023 Winner: Catch Des Moines (Metro)
- **Outstanding Promotional Material.** Honors a tourism attraction or community for excellence in promotional materials (print, TV, radio, outdoor, etc.). Any tourism-related promotional material is an eligible entry, including general or niche consumer publications, annual reports, etc. Five copies of the promotional material being nominated may be submitted by mail to the Iowa Tourism Office. In addition, a PDF copy or excerpt of the material may be submitted with the nomination form.
 - 2023 Winners: Catch Des Moines (Metro); Iowa Valley RC&D, Amana (Rural)
- **Outstanding Social Media Execution.** Honors a business for excellence in social media strategy.
 - 2023 Winners: Meet Ottumwa (Metro); Wright County Fair (Rural)
- **Outstanding Website.** Honors a tourism business for excellence in website and digital promotions.
 - 2023 Winners: Visit Fort Dodge (Metro); Jefferson Matters: A Main Street & Chamber Community (Rural)

The following categories demonstrate excellence in supporting and growing tourism in Iowa.

- **Outstanding Attraction.** Honors for-profit or nonprofit attractions.
 - 2023 Winners: Wilson's Orchard & Farm, Iowa City (Metro); Surf Ballroom & Museum, Clear Lake (Rural)
- **Outstanding Community.** Honors a community.
 - 2023 Winners: Council Bluffs (Metro); Winterset (Rural)
- **Outstanding Dining Business.** Honors a for-profit dining business.
 - 2023 Winners: de Kelder Speakeasy, Pella (Metro); Harvestville Farm, Donnellson (Rural)
- **Outstanding Event.** Honors an event/festival either held in-person or virtually.
 - 2023 Winners: Beyond Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience, Council Bluffs (Metro); Sidney Iowa Championship Rodeo (Rural)
- **Outstanding Individual Leader.** Honors an industry professional, volunteer, politician, partner or media providing long-term excellence in leadership and support for the tourism industry.
 - 2023 Winners: Joshua Schamberger, President at Think Iowa City (Metro); Delaney Evers, Tourism and Main Street Director at PACT, Centerville (Rural)
- **Outstanding Lodging Property.** Honors a for-profit lodging property.
 - 2023 Winners: King's Pointe Waterpark Resort, Storm Lake (Metro); Field of Dreams Movie Site, Dyersville (Rural)
- **Outstanding Retail Experience.** Honors a for-profit retail business or retail district that has demonstrated excellence in supporting tourism in Iowa.
 - 2023 Winner: The District: Czech Village & New Bohemia, Cedar Rapids (Metro); Cody Road Shopping District, LeClaire (Rural)

SCORING

Each of the awards will be scored numerically on the following statements (1 being poor, 10 being outstanding) for a top score of 50. Each nomination will be scored by three different judges and scores will be combined. The nomination with the highest score, out of 150 total points possible, will be named the winner.

Scoring for Outstanding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative; Outstanding Marketing Collaboration; Outstanding Niche Market Initiative; Outstanding Promotional Material; Outstanding Social Media Execution; and Outstanding Website. Note: Nomination may include links, PDFs and/or photos to support the nomination.

1. Objectives of the project are clearly stated, and results were achieved in terms of stated objectives. Nomination outlines the purpose and goals of the project and describes how goals were met.
2. Project design, development and implementation showed originality and creativity. The nomination explains the challenges the nominee was presented and how they overcame them using creativity.
3. Project showed innovation in developing new tourism markets, unconventional approaches to old markets or new technology use. The nomination provides details on why and how the new markets, approaches and/or technology were used.
4. Project showed growth over previous projects or new project resulted in measurable growth of community's tourism industry with a positive impact on the community and state. The nomination includes measurable numbers of return on investment, visitor numbers, revenue, etc. and how it supports the Iowa tourism industry as a whole.
5. Overall quality of submission and any supporting electronic or written material.

Scoring for Outstanding Attraction, Outstanding Community, Outstanding Dining Business, Outstanding Event, Outstanding Individual Leader, Outstanding Lodging Property and Outstanding Retail Experience. Note: Nomination may include links, PDFs and/or photos to support the nomination.

1. The nominee's work to support and grow tourism in Iowa is clearly stated. Provide commentary on why they are deserving of recognition.
2. The nominee showed originality and creativity in overcoming their challenges.
3. The nominee showed innovation in developing new tourism markets, unconventional approaches to old markets or new technology uses.
4. The nomination includes any measurable numbers such as a return on investment, visitor numbers, revenue, etc, to quantify how the nominee supported the Iowa tourism industry as a whole.
5. Overall quality of submission and any supporting electronic or written material.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

This award category will be voted for online. Second place winners from the above categories (excluding Outstanding Individual Leader) are eligible to win. Attendees will have the opportunity to read the award nominations that received the second-highest points in each category and vote. Scoring criteria is eliminated and the winner will be chosen by the highest number of votes. There will not be a population distinction in this category – all second-place nominees in both population categories will compete against each other.

- 2023 Winner: Travel Dubuque and Voices Productions

WINNERS' RECOGNITION AND BENEFITS

- Award winners will be announced and receive awards in a special ceremony on Wednesday, March 20, during the 2024 Iowa Tourism Conference.
- The winner of the People's Choice Award will receive a traveling trophy with their organization name engraved on it. They will keep the award for one year and return the award for presentation to the next year's People's Choice Award recipient. Each People's Choice Award recipient will also receive a certificate to keep.
- Winners will receive an official logo stating Winner of 2024 Iowa Tourism Award for use on advertising collateral, brochures and websites.
- Winning entries will be recognized in the Iowa Tourism Office's e-newsletter, on traveliowa.com and in a statewide press release.