



# 2025 TOURISM IMPACT SNAPSHOT

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Key Facts and Legislative Priorities  
for Iowa's Growth

Visitors contributed a direct impact of \$7.3 billion in 2023. This direct impact generated \$3.6 billion in indirect and induced impacts, resulting in a total economic impact of

## **\$10.9 BILLION IN THE IOWA ECONOMY.**

**This means that nearly \$20 million was spent EVERY DAY by visitors in Iowa.\***

### **LABOR INCOME IMPACTS**

In 2023, visitor activity sustained 50,145 direct jobs, with an additional 20,809 jobs indirectly supported, totaling 70,954 jobs statewide—**equivalent to one in every 18 jobs in Iowa.** Visitor-supported employment rose by 4.2% (or 2,022 jobs), reaching 50,145 jobs, nearing the 2019 benchmark.\*

### **EMPLOYMENT RECOVERY**

While visitor spending has rebounded to 113% of pre-pandemic levels, visitor-supported employment recovery lags at 91% of 2019 levels, highlighting a continued need to support workforce growth in tourism sectors.\*

Visitor spending in 2023 reached \$7.3 billion. Visitor spending grew 5.1% over the prior year. With an increase of \$351 million over the prior year, visitor spending topped

## **\$7 BILLION FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 2023.\***

**Visitors spent across a range of sectors:**



**Transportation:** \$1.9 billion;  
26% of all visitor spending



**Food & Beverage:** \$1.7 billion;  
23% of each visitor's budget



**Lodging** (including the value of 2nd homes): \$1.4 billion; 18% of visitor spending



**Recreation/Entertainment:** \$1.2 billion; 16% of visitor spending



**Retail:** \$1.2 billion; 16% of visitor spending



# TOURISM LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY

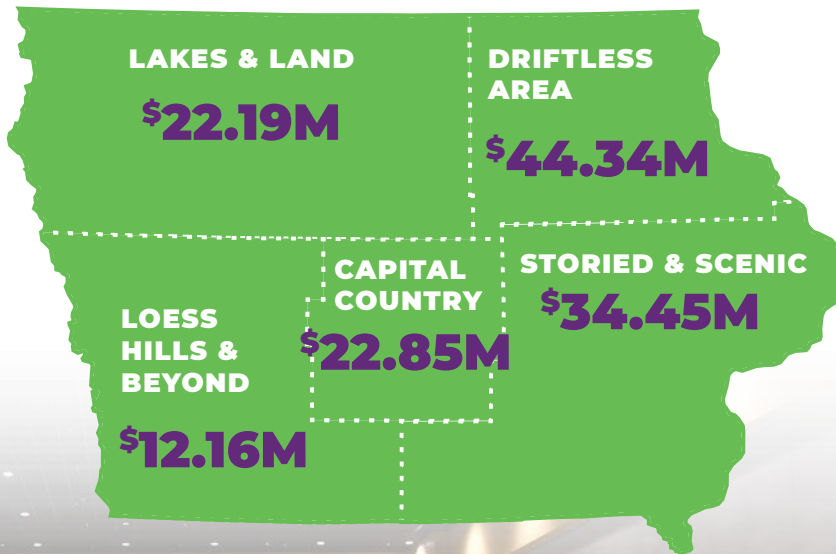
## MAINTAIN CONSISTENT TOURISM FUNDING

**Advocate for preserving current tourism line items in the state budget to ensure continued growth and development in the industry.**

The past few years, the industry has been appropriated over \$50 million yearly in funding. This substantial investment is actively fueling growth and development in Iowa's communities, specifically bolstering tourism initiatives.

Funding is distributed through projects such as Destination Iowa, Community Attraction & Tourism (CAT), Regional Sports Authority Districts, Meet in Iowa, Inspire Iowa just to name a few.

**FY23 & FY24 COMBINED -  
OVER \$135.98 MILLION DISTRIBUTED**



# TOURISM LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY

## PROMOTE TOURISM THROUGH USER-FUNDED ENHANCEMENTS

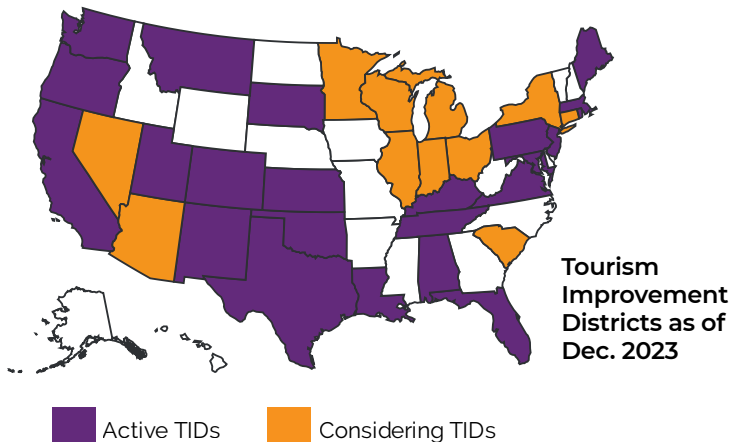
Support initiatives that allow for self-sustaining user fees to invest in and improve tourism destinations across Iowa.

### WHAT IS A TOURISM IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (TID)?

- A TID is a mechanism for funding tourism activities that are managed and desired by property owners that can be passed on to the tourist.

### TOURISM IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

- The amount of the tax is determined by property owners at the formation of the district, within the laws guidelines.
- Funds raised through the tax must be spent for the benefit of the properties paying the tax.
- Provides community growth using visitor income to bolster existing tax revenues
- Public-private partnership for a long term stable supplemental revenue source.



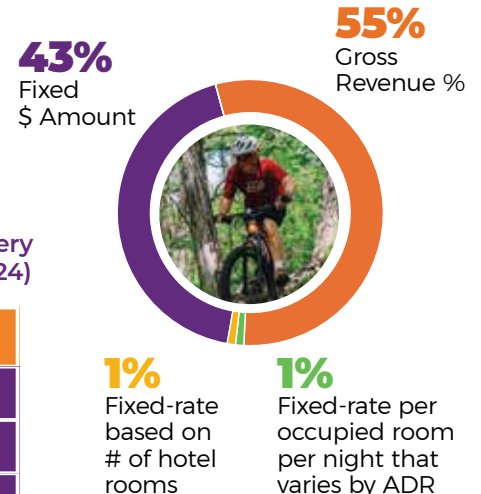
“TIDs are hotel-driven, stable sources of funding that, unlike state funded tourism, are used solely for efforts to generate more hotel overnight rooms and are never diverted to pay down unfunded liabilities of municipalities. In my experience, TIDs have been a tremendous benefit to their destinations in general and to the assessed hotels in particular. Our hotels have seen a meaningful bottom line business improvement from the activities of the TID.” - **Remo Pizzichemi, Hotel Operator (Scranton, Los Angeles, Fort Wayne) Welcome Group Inc.**

“TIDs are changing the funding landscape for destinations across the country. I am pleased that we were able to pass TID legislation in 2023, which will likely be a game changer for our convention and visitor bureaus throughout Illinois. We are excited to partner with our DMOs to generate additional funding so that they can continue to advance the state’s hospitality industry.” - **Michael Jacobson, President of the Illinois Hotel and Lodging Association**

**213 TIDS**  
**23 STATES**

Most Recent: Montgomery & Florence, AL (June 2024)

ANNUAL AMOUNT RAISED	
Low	\$10,000
High	\$43,000,000
Total	\$562,682,372



Tourism Improvement Districts Source: CIVITAS

# TOURISM LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY

## MAINTAIN IOWA'S SUMMER TOURISM SEASON

**Safeguard the current school start date of August 23 and explore options to enhance summer, benefiting tourism statewide.**

- In 2023, tourism generated \$1.1 billion in state and local taxes generated. This is enough to pay the salaries of 19,681 Iowa public-school teachers.\*
- Tourism is more than places to visit—it's a vital contributor to jobs, economic growth, quality of life, and revenue generation, with impacts that reach every job sector, county, school, and household across the state. Summer jobs in tourism provide students with valuable first work experiences, preparing them for future roles in the workforce.

School Start Date Sources: Arrivalist (2023); The Economic Impact of Tourism on Iowa's Counties 2022, Tourism Economics (2023); Department of Revenue, 2022 Sales Tax Receipts (2023)

### ECONOMIC IMPACTS AND FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF EARLIER SCHOOL START DATE

- Changing Iowa's school start date has a negative impact on tourism, leading to a reduction in August visitors.
- The last 2 weeks of August 2023 welcomed 1.8 million visitors or 128,571 visitors per day.
- Visitors are spending **\$22.36 million per day in August.**
- The allowance for school to start 4 days earlier equates a loss of \$89.4 million to visitor spend.
- Decreased consumer spending contributes to a loss of millions of dollars to sales tax collections; including valuable local option sales tax.

### OKOBOJI CASE STUDY

- Travelers spend over \$1.55 million per day during the peak months of July, August, September.
- Okoboji has a population of less than 1,000 people with minimal corporate businesses. Visitors are primarily supporting the small, locally owned businesses that in turn reinvest in the local community.



# TOURISM LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY FUND THE MAJOR TOURISM ATTRACTION FUND

**Secure ongoing support for the Major Tourism Attraction Fund to boost large-scale tourism projects that enhance Iowa's appeal.**

The Sports Market Analysis reviewed economic impact data of 472 sport tourism events in Iowa in 2022/2023. These events have played a significant role in stimulating economic activity across various sectors within the state.\*\*

- Over 1.37 million total attendees engaged with tournaments/competitions
- \$278.7 million visitor spending across these events
- 428,000 hotel room nights
- Over \$21 million in sports tourism related taxes

\*\*Source: Iowa Sports Tourism Market Analysis, Huddle Up Group, September 2024

**VISITOR SPENDING  
GENERATED  
\$1.9 BILLION  
IN TOTAL GOVERNMENT  
REVENUES IN 2023.**

State and local taxes alone tallied \$1.1 billion. Each household in Iowa would need to be taxed an additional \$857 to replace the visitor generated taxes received by state and local governments in 2023.\*

\*Source: The Iowa Visitor Economy 2023, Tourism Economics, October 2024



## VISITATION ANNUAL REPORT BY TOURISM AREA \*\*\*

Visitation data represents an estimated sample of visitors to the area. Visitors must be a minimum of 50 miles away from home and stay a minimum of two hours in an area. Data does not include travelers under the age of 18 nor international visitation.

### TOP 5 OUT-OF-STATE ORIGIN DMA

- Minneapolis / St. Paul, MN
- Omaha, NE
- Chicago, IL
- Kansas City, MO/KS
- Madison, WI

### TOTAL AVERAGE OF 7.8 MILLION VISITORS ACROSS THE STATE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

- Winter: avg 1.59 million visitors
- Spring: avg 2.11 million visitors
- Summer: avg 2.2 million visitors
- Fall: avg 1.9 million visitors

### AVG 38.32% OF ALL VISITORS ARE FROM OUT-OF-STATE

Loess Hills & Beyond pulls the most out-of-state visitors

### TRIP TYPE OF ALL TRAVELERS

- Overnight = 44.82%
- Capital County has the highest average overnight percentage of visitors at 47.1%
- Day-Trips = 55.18%
- Stored & Scenic has the highest average day trip percentage of visitors at 58%

# MISSION

## Tourism's Champion;

increasing visitation and improving  
Iowa's economy through partnerships.

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2025

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A united team of travel professionals, providing resources  
to foster diverse communities that inspire travelers.

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