

ELEVATE IOWA TOURISM

Education Scholarship



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Program Description:

The Elevate Iowa Tourism: Education Scholarship aims to empower Iowa's tourism professionals through financial assistance, facilitating their participation in regional and national educational conferences. Administered by Iowa Travel Industry Partners (iTIP), with funding support from the Iowa Tourism Office (Iowa Economic Development Authority).

Program Goals

The program strives to:

- Enhance Professional Development by enabling tourism professionals to access high-quality learning experiences.
- Increase Representation of Iowa's tourism workforce at national industry events, elevating Iowa's presence in the tourism sector.
- Empower the Workforce by equipping participants with industry insights and best practices to benefit their communities and organizations.

Funding Details:

- The scholarship covers 60% of event registration costs and associated travel expenses, up to a maximum of \$2,000 per person.
- Eligible expenses include airfare, rental cars, mileage reimbursement, hotels, and transportation during the event. Please note that meals are not covered.
- Up to \$40,000 is available for the first year of the program, with a maximum of \$4,000 per organization.

Eligibility

- *Employment:* Applicants must have a minimum of six months of employment within Iowa's tourism or hospitality industry.
- *Membership:* iTIP members will receive priority, but all Iowa tourism professionals are encouraged to apply.
- *Organization Limit:* A maximum of two individuals from the same organization may receive funding each program year (only one attendee per event).
- *Event Type:* Conferences focused on professional development, not sales or trade shows, are eligible.
- *Event Location:* Event must be hosted by a regional/national level organization, most likely hosting in another state. Events hosted by Iowa based organizations are ineligible.

Eligible Expenses

Scholarship funds cover:

- Event registration fees (If your conference offers, and timing aligns, please utilize the early-bird pricing.)
- Travel (airfare, mileage, rental car, hotel costs)
- Note: Meals are not reimbursable.
- Recipient has until December 31, 2025 to spend the funds.

Application Process

1. Submission: Applicants must provide a detailed budget, event relevance, and their commitment to covering the 40% match.
2. Scoring Criteria: Applications will be evaluated on event relevance, impact potential, membership status, and alignment with Iowa's strategic tourism goals.

Sponsorship Fund Distribution

- Following approval, iTIP will reimburse the recipient's conference registration fees.
- For travel and accommodations expenses, recipients will be reimbursed after submitting receipts within 30 days of the event's conclusion. A template and form will be provided for the submission of expenses.

Post-Event Evaluation

Recipients will complete a post-event report, detailing:

1. What is the biggest take away you have from attending this professional development opportunity?
2. Will you budget to attend the event again? Why or why not?
3. What is something your tourism colleagues should keep in mind when considering attending this event in the future?
4. Write a paragraph on what you learned from your favorite session of the conference. Include why the session was beneficial and how the topic connects back to your work or the work of Iowa tourism as a whole.

Administration

A volunteer committee, comprising iTIP and industry members, will review applications. Members of this committee can apply but will abstain from voting on their applications. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please reach out to [Chelsea Lerud](#).

To apply for the Elevate Iowa Tourism: Education Scholarship, please visit the following link: [Application Form](#).

Program Questions:

Chelsea Lerud

Executive Director, iTIP

clerud@iowatravelindustry.org | 515-207-0009

Examples of Eligible Conferences

Explore the list of potential educational conferences below that you may consider applying to attend. Please note that applications are not restricted to these options; this list is designed to inspire your search for a conference that aligns with your interests and goals.

- American Alliance of Museums
 - Association of Midwest Museums Annual Conference
- American Association for State & Local History
- American Hotel & Lodging Association Conference
- Destination Capitol Hill
- Destinations International (DI)
 - CEO Summit, Advocacy Summit, Business Operations Summit, Marketings & Communications Summit, Visitor Services Summit, Social Inclusion Summit
- Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO)
- Institute for Organization Management (U.S. Chamber of Commerce)
- Mid-America Chamber Executives (MACE)
- Midwest Fairs Association
- National Festival & Events Conference
- National Restaurant Association Conference
 - Marketing Executives Group, Public Affairs Conference, Restaurant Legal Summit, Supply Chain Conference, The Table
- Sports Events & Tourism Association (Sports ETA)
 - Women's Summit, Facilities Summit, 4S Summit, Chief Executive Summit
- SportsTravel Leadership Forum
- Travel & Tourism Research Association (TTRA) Marketing Outlook Forum
 - CenStates Annual Chapter Conference
- Upper Midwest Convention & Visitors Bureau (UMCVB)