



iTIP
Iowa Travel Industry Partners

Your Tourism Tool Box

Resources for Museums

The Role of Museums

Museums play a central role in promoting education, preserving history, supporting tourism, and enhancing cultural life in Iowa. iTIP wants to assist museums by providing resources to improve the marketing ability and ultimately the visibility of these institutions. By taking advantage of these opportunities, museums can enhance their marketing efforts, increase its visibility, and attract more visitors, contributing to the growth of the museum and the local tourism industry.

Museums are important to Iowa for several key reasons:

1. **Cultural Preservation:** Iowa's museums help preserve and showcase the state's rich cultural, historical, and artistic heritage. They provide a place to learn about the people, events, and industries that shaped Iowa's development, from Native American history to agriculture, industrial growth, and social movements.
2. **Education:** Museums serve as educational resources for people of all ages, offering hands-on learning experiences, exhibits, and programs that help visitors understand science, history, art, and technology. They enrich school curricula and provide opportunities for lifelong learning.
3. **Tourism and Economy:** Museums attract tourists to Iowa, boosting the state's economy. Visitors to museums spend money on local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and transportation. Prominent Iowa museums draw national and international attention.
4. **Community Engagement:** Museums act as gathering spaces for local communities, hosting events, workshops, and exhibitions that engage residents and foster a sense of pride. They often serve as places where people can connect, reflect, and discuss important topics.
5. **Artistic Expression:** Iowa's museums provide platforms for local, national, and international artists to showcase their work. This helps cultivate an appreciation for the arts and contributes to Iowa's cultural vibrancy.

Marketing Opportunities

It's not only build it and they will come... its build it, provide interesting programing, market it to the right people, and then they will come!

- Free Marketing Tools: The Iowa Tourism Office offers various free marketing tools, such as website listings. By utilizing these tools, the museum can increase its visibility and attract more visitors. Do you want to be featured in Travel Iowa's promotional efforts? Your museum must have an active up-to-date website listing and be open regular hours.
- Online Event Calendar: Adding events to the online calendar on traveliowa.com can help the museum reach a wider audience. This calendar is frequently reviewed by travelers planning their trips.
- Social Media Engagement: By tagging images with #ThisIslaowa and connecting with iTIP's social media channels, the museum can be featured more prominently in marketing efforts. Consider reaching out to your local high school or college to recruit a volunteer to assist with this important (and often FREE marketing opportunity).
- Co-op Advertising: Travel Iowa often releases their Annual Advertising Coop Program in the Spring to help attractions purchase out-of-state advertising at a fraction of the cost. Or partner with other local businesses and tourism organizations with advertising to amplify the museum's marketing reach.
- Local Welcome Centers in Iowa- Reach out to local visitor centers throughout Iowa to submit promotional materials for potential visitors to pick up. List of centers are located in the industry section of Travelliowa.com.
- i-TIP Brochure Request Fulfillment Program: This program works to connect attractions and hotels to provide promotional information to be available for visitors.
- Look at promoting your event at free local calendars. Many organizations like CVB's and Chambers are looking for events to promote. Local media outlets may have a way to submit your event to their calendars as well.
- Is your museum interested in attending and promoting at tourism industry promotional events, like travel shows or tradeshow for motorcoach travel? Consider reaching out to your local CVB, Chamber, or other like organizations to put together a cooperative effort to cost share.
- Provide interesting content, up-to-date information, quality images and video to your local CVB's and Chambers. They are looking for things to promote and if they have the information they can use it to help museums



Grants

- Iowa Tourism Grant (ITG): This grant funds tourism-related marketing initiatives, meetings, and events. The museum can apply for funding to support its marketing campaigns. Projects should include out-of-state marketing initiatives that build on the Iowa Tourism Office priorities.
- Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) Grant: This grant assists projects that provide recreational, cultural, entertainment, and educational attractions. The museum can use these funds to develop transformational projects that enhance its visitor experience.
- Historical Resource Development Program (HRDP): This program provides funds to preserve, conserve, interpret, and educate the public about historical resources. The museum can apply for funding to support its preservation and educational efforts.
- Elevate Iowa Educational Grants- iTIP, with support from the Iowa Tourism Office, offers the [Elevate Iowa Tourism: Education Scholarship](#) to advance the professional development of tourism industry professionals. Open to any tourism organization in Iowa, this program provides up to \$2,000 per individual for attendance at conferences that strengthen skills and knowledge, helping to grow Iowa's tourism impact.
- State Historical Society of Iowa, [Grants | State Historical Society of Iowa](#), is another great resource that helps museums tap into a variety of grant and funding opportunities. This site has a broad range of possibilities that cover the unique history of what Iowa has to offer, recognizes need, and provides opportunities for nearly everyone.



Knowledge Building

- i-TIP Economic Impact Calculator: Museums who want to tell their story in dollars and cents can use this helpful tool. The Economic Impact Calculator is designed to measure the full effect of an event on the local economy. The model takes average spending inputs for the attendees of an event, the total population in attendance, the percentage of attendees from outside the events county, and the share of people requiring a hotel room due to the event to calculate the impact.
- Get involved in committees at the State Level with either Iowa Tourism Office and i-TIP to learn valuable insights on operational topics. Pro tip...interested in writing grants, volunteer to be reviewer for the ITO grant program to learn the way successful applicants submit their projects for grants.
- i-TIP Mentorship Program connects professionals from similar entities for one-on-one training on the Iowa Tourism industry and specific needs of that job. Mentors and mentees will commit themselves to set aside 30 to 60 minutes per month to cover the subjects listed over the course of the year.
- Helpful websites: Iowa Tourism Office: <http://industrypartners.traveliowa.com>

Iowa Travel Industry Partners (iTIP): <http://iowatravelindustry.org>



Other Resources

- Explore utilizing the Department of Transportation Road sign TODS (tourist oriented directional signage) program for wayfinding directionals.
- Explore finding a local landowner who would be willing to place a small sign on their property. Be careful to follow all DOT signage regulations.
- Grant writing assistance may be available at the local level through organizations like a CVB, Chamber of Commerce, or other service providing organizations.
- Explore hosting a local theme night at the Museum to garner local interest as well to provide an interesting opportunity to visitors.
- High School or College Age Volunteers: Social media can be difficult for those who are not trained in or particularly interested in the media source but it can be a inexpensive way to increase visibility and keep the public updated on what is happening in your facility. Today's high school or college has grown up with social media and can be very successful in volunteering to work on this important marketing tool. And many students are looking for ways to volunteer more for a silver cord, application or resume builders so it is a win-win for both students and museums.