



# **2026 TOURISM IMPACT SNAPSHOT**

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Key Facts and Legislative Priorities  
for Iowa's Growth

# VISITORS CONTRIBUTED A TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF \$11.2 BILLION TO THE IOWA ECONOMY.

This means that \$20.5 million was spent  
EVERY DAY by visitors in Iowa.\*

## LABOR INCOME IMPACTS

In 2024, visitor activity sustained **71,954 total jobs statewide** - visitor economy sustains 5.5% of all jobs in Iowa (1 in 18 jobs in Iowa). These employees could fill Kinnick Stadium.\*

## EMPLOYMENT RECOVERY

Tourism-supported employment grew 1.6% in 2024. However, the industry still faces a workforce gap of nearly 4,000 positions compared to pre-pandemic levels. Strengthening Iowa's tourism workforce will be essential to fully support and grow the sector. Direct tourism roles accounted for 3.9% of Iowa's total employment in 2024.\*

# VISITOR SPENDING GREW 2.8% OVER THE PRIOR YEAR.\*

In 2024, visitor spending reached

# \$7.5 BILLION

## Visitors spent across a range of sectors:



**Transportation:** \$1.9 billion;  
25% of all visitor's budget



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



**Lodging** (including the value of  
2nd homes): \$1.4 billion; 19% of  
visitor spending



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



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



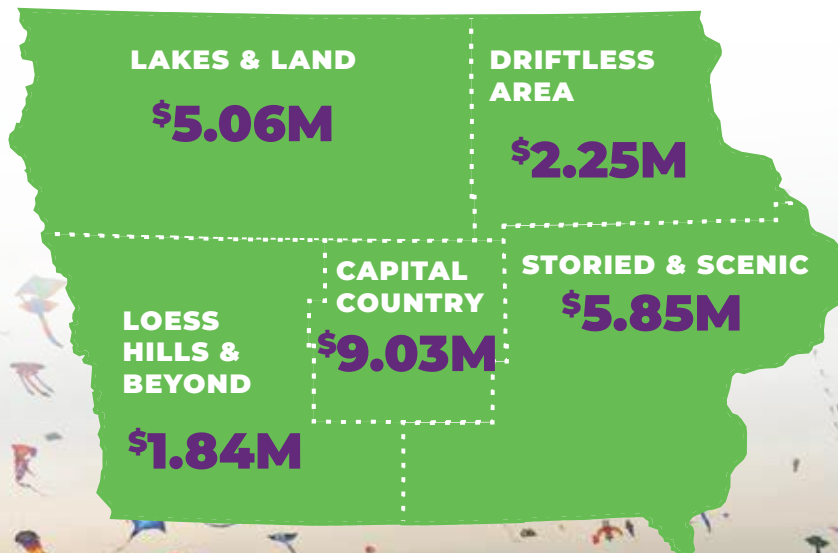
# TOURISM LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY

## PRESERVE AND GROW STATE INVESTMENT IN TOURISM

Continue funding proven programs such as **Destination Iowa, Regional Sports Authority Districts (RSAD)**, and **Community Attraction & Tourism (CAT)**. Sustained investment in the Iowa Tourism Office and outdoor recreation programs is essential to expand statewide impact and ensure communities across Iowa benefit from tourism growth.

The yearly substantial investment in tourism is actively fueling growth and development in Iowa's communities, specifically bolstering tourism initiatives.

**FY24 & FY25 COMBINED -  
OVER \$24.03 MILLION DISTRIBUTED**



**BUILDING VIBRANT COMMUNITIES**

# TOURISM LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY

## KEEP IOWA COMPETITIVE

Advance new opportunities such as Tourism Improvement Districts (TIDs), which give local hospitality partners the ability to collectively invest in marketing and development initiatives. Protect critical existing sources like the hotel/motel tax that communities rely on to support tourism growth.

"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, Welcome Group Inc.  
(Scranton, Los Angeles, Fort Wayne)

### TID Funding Models in the USA

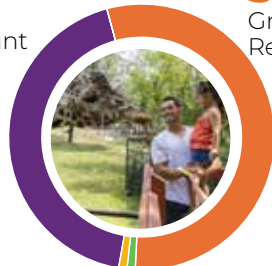
**221 TIDS**  
**25 STATES**

Most Recent: Longmont, CO  
(August 2025)

ANNUAL AMOUNT RAISED	
Low	\$10,000
High	\$47,200,000
Total	\$724,800,000

**43%**

Fixed  
\$ Amount



**55%**

Gross  
Revenue %

**1%**

Fixed-rate  
based on  
# of hotel  
rooms

**1%**

Fixed-rate per  
occupied room  
per night that  
varies by ADR

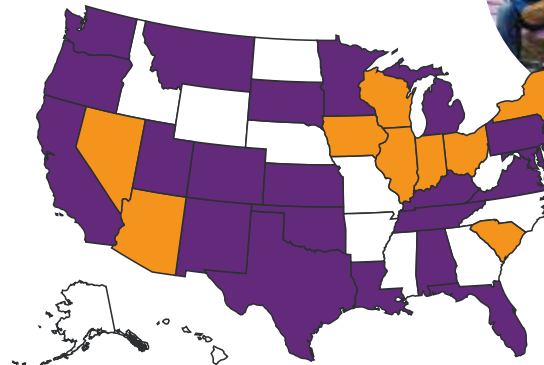
Tourism Improvement Districts Source: CIVITAS

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

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

### TOURISM IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

- The amount of the tax is determined by lodging 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.



Tourism  
Improvement  
Districts as of  
October 2025



Considering TIDs



Active TIDs



# TOURISM LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY

## MAINTAIN IOWA'S SUMMER TOURISM SEASON

**Safeguard the current school start date of August 23 to ensure a strong end-of-summer tourism season that benefits attractions, events, and communities across Iowa. Preserving this timeframe protects an important period of visitor spending and seasonal employment, supporting jobs and local businesses.**

- In 2024, tourism generated \$1.2 billion in state and local taxes. This is enough to pay the salaries of 19,849 public school teachers.\*
- Local tax revenues from visitor activity tallied \$543 million with property taxes, bed taxes, fees, and income taxes supporting local governmental revenues. Local revenues grew \$35 million in 2024.\*
- Tourism is a core part of Iowa's economic development strategy. It supports jobs, strengthens local economies, and generates revenue that benefits every county, school district, and household. Its impact spans nearly every sector. Seasonal tourism jobs give students essential early work experience for Iowa's future workforce.

School Start Date Sources: Arrivalist (2024); Economic Impact of Visitors to Iowa 2024, Tourism Economics (2023); Department of Revenue, 2024 Sales Tax Receipts (September, 2024)

### 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 2024 welcomed 777,000 visitors or 55,484 visitors per day
- Visitors are spending **\$20.5 million per day in the state**
- The allowance for school to start 4 days earlier equates up to an estimated **loss of \$57.4 million in 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

## MAKE NEW TOURISM PROGRAMS WORK FOR IOWA

With the new Major Events & Tourism Fund established, the focus is on making sure it is implemented effectively. Proper rollout will ensure Iowa can compete for large-scale events and projects that bring national attention and economic impact to our state.

The Sports Market Analysis reviewed economic impact data of 472 sport tourism events in Iowa in 2022/2033. 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

**VISITOR SPENDING  
GENERATED  
\$2.0 BILLION  
IN TOTAL GOVERNMENT  
REVENUES IN 2024.**

State and local taxes alone tallied \$1.2 billion. Each household in Iowa would need to be taxed an additional \$891 to replace the visitor generated taxes received by state and local governments in 2024.\*

\*Source: Economic Impact of Visitors to Iowa 2024, Tourism Economics, October 2025

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



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

Visitation data represents an estimated sample of visitors to the area in 2024. 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
- Chicago, IL
- Omaha, NE
- Kansas City, MO/KS
- Sioux Falls / Mitchell, SD

### IOWA WELCOMED 46.1 MILLION VISITORS ACROSS THE STATE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

- Winter: 22.42% of total visitors
- Spring: 25.93% of total visitors
- Summer: 29.18% of total visitors
- Fall: 22.48% of total visitors

### AVG 45% OF ALL VISITORS ARE FROM OUT-OF-STATE

Loess Hills & Beyond pulls the most out-of-state visitors, 53% of their visitors

### TRIP TYPE OF ALL TRAVELERS TO IOWA

- **Overnight = 67.3%**
  - Capital Country has the highest average overnight percentage of visitors at 76.3%
- **Day-Trips = 32.2%**
  - Loess Hills & Beyond has the highest average day trip percentage of visitors at 41.4%

\*\*\* Source: Arrivalist, 2024 Visitation

## ITIP MISSION

### Tourism's Champion;

increasing visitation and improving  
Iowa's economy through partnerships.

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2026

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*Iowa Travel Industry Partners*

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**iTIP is Iowa's statewide tourism association:**

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

**IOWATRAVELINDUSTRY.ORG**

