

SAVE OUR SUMMERS

Protect Iowa's School Start Date of August 23



Visitor Spending

Reached **\$7.5 B** in 2024.
\$20.5 M is spent every day by visitors in Iowa.



Travel Generated Employment

Tourism in 2024 supported a total of **71,918 jobs**.



Travel Generated Payroll

2022 tourism generated **\$1.4 billion** in direct labor income.



Travel Generated Tax Receipts

generate **\$1.2 B in state and local tax revenue**.

Each household in Iowa would need to **be taxed an additional \$891** to replace visitor-generated taxes.

Iowa State & Local taxes generated by the visitor economy could **pay the salaries of 19,849 public school teachers**.

When school starts before August 23, Iowa loses visitors, jobs, and tourism revenue.

Economic Impacts & Financial Consequences of an Earlier School Start Date

- Changing Iowa's school start date has a negative impact on tourism, leading to a reduction in August visitors.
- August 2024 welcomed **1.72 M visitors** or **55,484 visitors per day**.
- Visitors are spending **\$20.5 M per day** in the state.
- The allowance for school to start 4 days earlier equates to an **estimated \$57.4 M** loss in visitor spending.
- Decreased consumer spending contributes to a loss of millions of dollars to sales tax collections; including valuable local option sales tax.

Sources: Arrivalist (2024); The Economic Impact of Tourism on Iowa's Counties 2024, Tourism Economics (2025); Department of Revenue, 2022 Sales Tax Receipts (2023)

IowaTravelIndustry.org



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Okoboji Case Study

- Travelers spend over **\$1.55 million per day** during the peak months of July, August, September
- A change in school start date by 4 days equates a loss of \$6.2 million in visitor spend
- Once school begins, visitation drops sharply—falling from 320,000 visitors in August to 220,000 in September, a loss of 100,000 visitors in a single month.
- Okoboji has a population 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.

The Risk of a Floating Date

- A floating date introduces year-to-year variability in the school calendar.
- Some proposals could allow school to begin as early as August 18, cutting deeper into Iowa's peak tourism season.
- Variability creates uncertainty for businesses; complicating staffing, pricing, and operational planning.

Proposed Start Dates

2026: Mon, Aug 24	2031: Mon, Aug 18
2027: Mon, Aug 23	2032: Mon, Aug 23
2028: Mon, Aug 21	2033: Mon, Aug 22
2029: Mon, Aug 20	2034: Mon, Aug 21
2030: Mon, Aug 19	2035: Mon, Aug 20

Detrimental Effects

- Substantial revenue & job losses for major attractions: water parks/city pools, amusement parks, zoos, golf courses, lodging properties, state parks, restaurants, & youth sports tournaments.
- In a time of increased funding needs for schools, losing visitor dollars is detrimental.

Broader Consequences

- Tourism is more than places to visit; it's jobs, economic growth, quality of life, & revenue generation.
- Tourism impacts reach every job sector, county, school, child, & household in the state.
- Not all education happens inside a school. Summer jobs provide students their first job experiences. This work benefits their future as members of the workforce.

Sources: Arrivalist (2024); The Economic Impact of Tourism on Iowa's Counties 2024, Tourism Economics (2025); Department of Revenue, 2022 Sales Tax Receipts (2023)