



## **iDISCOVER: Lead, Grow, Connect** **Advancing Tourism Through Connection & Discovery**

### ***2027 - Request For Proposal***

**Overview:** iDISCOVER: Lead, Grow, Connect is a 1.5-day professional development program for tourism industry partners. This event is capped at 40 attendees, plus speakers and staff. Attendees spend time learning from speakers, engaging in peer-to-peer collaboration, exploring industry resources, and networking with tourism professionals from across Iowa.

The structure and content of iDISCOVER are guided by iTIP's DREAM framework with the intention to advance tourism through connection and discovery:

- **Development** — self, professional growth, and organizations
- **Resources** — tools needed for success and how to use them
- **Education** — the event experience itself
- **Advocacy** — training and industry awareness
- **Marketing** — marketing yourself and your destination

iDISCOVER is designed to be highly interactive and participant-focused, featuring hands-on workshops, peer-to-peer learning, and experiences that actively engage attendees. The event also provides an opportunity for host communities to showcase their tourism assets to industry professionals from across Iowa. Proposals should address each section of this RFP and demonstrate how community partners will work together to support the attendee experience.

#### **Submit Proposal To:**

Chelsea Lerud

Executive Director, Iowa Travel Industry Partners (iTIP)

515-207-0009 | [clerud@iowatravelindustry.org](mailto:clerud@iowatravelindustry.org)

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Friday, July 24, 2026 EOD to [clerud@iowatravelindustry.org](mailto:clerud@iowatravelindustry.org)**

*A site visit by Education committee members may be conducted before the final host location is selected. Selection announcement is anticipated in mid-September 2026.*

#### **Event Dates:**

- Monday & Tuesday, February 22 - 23, 2027

## Venue Needs

- General meeting space with crescent rounds (tables of 6) for maximum of 45 attendees
- AV Required (screen + projector & microphone)
- Vendor space: space for 5 8'ft tables
- Venue budget target: \$1200 maximum total, including room rental and required AV
- Describe if iTIP or the venue are responsible for the set-up of tables in the space and the post-event clean up.
- Describe if table linens are available and their pricing.
- If selected, the meeting venue must be, or be willing to become, members of iTIP ([membership information](#)). Membership registration is to be completed within 60 days of selection. Please provide a signed statement from the venue (on venue letter head) acknowledging this requirement.

## Hotel Needs

- Property must have completed, or be willing to complete, the [Lodging Human Trafficking Awareness Certification](#) by the Iowa Department of Public Safety.
  - To be completed within 60 days of selection.
- Monday rooms: 30 rooms blocked (*preferred price \$115 - \$130*)
- Sunday rooms: 5 rooms blocked (*preferred price \$115 - \$130*)
- It is requested that the room block be ready for reservations within 4 months of the event. A 2-week cut off for room reservations is desired. An option to add to the block if registrations come in earlier than anticipated is preferred.
- Request for no attrition.
- Indicate if complimentary parking is available or describe any parking fees.
- If selected, the lodging property must be, or be willing to become, members of iTIP ([membership information](#)). Membership registration is to be completed within 60 days of selection. Please provide a signed statement from the lodging property (on property letter head) acknowledging this requirement.

## Catering Needs

- iDISCOVER provides breakfast (x1), lunch (x2), and dinner (x1) for attendees. Describe the catering options and the price per person for each meal type. A light snack option is also needed for Monday morning and mid-afternoon and Tuesday mid-afternoon. All catering should include table service needs.
  - The total food and beverage budget is around \$130 per person for the event.
- Monday evening meal should be something that is off-site from the regular meeting venue.
- It is requested that all catering contact information is provided to iTIP 3 months in advance of the event.

### Activity Needs

- Monday evening is offered as a group activity for all attendees at the event (maximum of 45 attendees). This should include an activity and dinner that iTIP will pay for. This is your chance to show off the unique aspects of your community to your industry colleagues through an interactive experience. The all-in budget for this evening programming is usually \$1000 or less.
- If activities and meal locations are not within walking distance of the host lodging property, shuttle services will be needed to transport the group – approximately 3 - 4 hours for 40 attendees. Please provide options and estimated pricing.
- Attendees may arrive Sunday. iTIP will not be hosting an organized function. Attendees may plan with each other if desired.

### Speaker Needs

- Attendees value authentic, locally driven content. Host communities are strongly encouraged to recommend 4-6 local speakers with expertise in tourism, hospitality, community development, marketing, advocacy, organizational growth, or professional development.
  - Sessions should offer practical, educational takeaways aligned with iTIP's DREAM framework - Development, Resources, Education, Advocacy, and Marketing - and may be 60 or 90 minutes in length. Content should highlight the strengths and character of the host community, with priority consideration given to proposals that include strong local speaker recommendations and concepts that showcase local expertise and assets.
  - Recommendations should include speaker name, organization/company, proposed topic, and a brief description of the session concept.
  - The best speakers and sessions are the ones that include an engagement activity and don't simply talk at the attendees.

### Other Notes

- Proposals that include incentives (sponsorships, host covering aspects of event needs, in-kind support, etc.) available to iTIP for hosting in your community are given strong consideration.
- The selected host destination will be invited to participate in monthly iTIP Education Committee meetings during the planning process.
  - The host community is heavily relied upon to support planning efforts by bridging local connections and offering the best suggestions to highlight the destination to industry peers.

- The submitted proposal is simply a suggestion of activities that could be offered during iDISCOVER. If selected as the host community, the final selection of activities and programming will be made in partnership between the Education Committee, host community representation, and iTIP staff. The Education Committee will work with the host community to finalize and confirm reservations, ensuring all activities align with program goals.

**Sample iDISCOVER Schedule:**

**Day 0: Sunday**

- No organized events will be hosted on Sunday. Attendees are welcome to come in early, and can coordinate a group dinner if desired.

**Day 1: Monday**

- 9:15 – 9:45 AM Registration
- 9:45 - 10 AM Welcome / Introductions
- 10 - 11 AM General Session
- 11 – 11:15 AM Break
- 11:15 – 12:15 PM General Session
- 12:15 - 1 PM Lunch
- 1 – 2 PM General Session
- 2- 2:15 PM Break
- 2:15 – 3:15 PM General Session
- 3:15 – 3:30 PM Break
- 3:30 – 4:30 PM General Session
- 4:30 - 5:30 PM Free Time
- 5:30 - 9 PM Offsite Dinner & Group Activity

**Day 2: Tuesday**

- 8 – 8:45 AM Breakfast
- 8:45 - 9 AM Welcome
- 9 - 10:30 AM Workshop / General Session
- 10:30 - 10:45 AM Break
- 10:45 - 11:45 AM Workshop / General Session
- 12 – 1 PM Lunch & Closing
- 1 – 3 PM Event Tear Down