Destination Iowa FAQ

**What types of projects is this program intended for?**

Destination Iowa is intended to fund transformational attractions that will raise Iowa’s national profile, welcome out-of-state travelers, and increase visitor spending while accelerating tourism’s recovery.

Examples of projects that are expected to be competitive in this program are major trail connectors or loops, new and substantial water recreation, and new facilities designed to enhance sports or cultural events.

Examples of projects that will not be competitive in this program are pools/splash pads, libraries, streetscapes, or other projects intended primarily for residents of a community or its immediate surroundings. Such projects are more likely to receive funding from the Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) Program administered by the Enhance Iowa Board and IEDA or the Great Places Program, administered by the Department of Cultural Affairs. Projects that propose modest updates to existing facilities are also unlikely to score high enough to receive funding.

For more information about the CAT grant, or if you are interested in being notified of applications deadlines and application release, please complete the “CAT Intent to Apply” at this link: [Enhance Iowa | Iowa Economic Development Authority (iowaeda.com)](https://www.iowaeda.com/enhance-iowa/).

For more information about the Great Places Program: [Iowa Great Places Program Designation & Re-Designation Guidelines | IDCA (iowaculture.gov)](https://iowaculture.gov/arts/grants/iowa-great-places/iowa-great-places-program-designation-re-designation-guidelines#:~:text=The%20Iowa%20Great%20Places%20program,to%20live%2C%20work%20and%20visit.)

**Is there a minimum total project cost required to receive funding?**

IEDA has not established a specific minimum total project cost. However, applicants are advised that total project costs of less than $5 million will generally not be considered competitive in this program.

Total project costs are one factor that will be considered in determining whether a project is considered transformational and within the intended uses of these funds. Other factors include the size of the community, the statewide economic impact of the project, and the cultural or historical significance of the project. These factors are considered interrelated and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

**I’m concerned that funds will be awarded quickly, and I don’t want to miss out. Do I need to apply by May 9th to be considered?**

Destination Iowa plans to fund major projects that have the potential to change the tourism landscape in Iowa. While we need to consider projects that are shovel-ready (meaning a majority of financing is secured and the project can be under contract by the end of 2024), we do not anticipate rushing through the review process to complete awards as fast as possible. We want your best idea! Even if it takes a little time to put it together.

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis until December 31, 2022 or until funds are exhausted. Applications that are incomplete or for projects that have not yet met all eligibility criteria will not be forwarded to the scoring committee.

**Can my community college, state agency, or regent university apply for these funds?**

State entities such as regent universities, community colleges, and other state agencies are not eligible applicants.

**Will our project be considered if it will utilize other state or federal sources of funds?**

The Destination Iowa program does not prohibit those receiving state or federal dollars from other programs from applying for a Destination Iowa grant. The exception to this rule is projects that are part of an Iowa Reinvestment District. Projects with more local sources of funding (i.e., city/county, donations) may score more favorably than those with significant federal/state funding. ARPA funds received directly by the city or county are an eligible form of funding for the program.

**Can in-kind donations be included as required local match?**

Up to 15% of your local match can be in-kind. In-kind must be a service or product donated to the project that would have otherwise been paid for. An example: Interior or exterior painting documented with a quote of the value to hire this work done. IEDA has sole discretion to determine whether an   
in-kind donation is an acceptable match.

**Which fund should I apply for? Can I apply for more than one fund?**

No, you must select the fund that is most appropriate for your project. Page 3 of the application provides a checklist to assist you in determining eligibility for each fund.

**The Tourism Attraction Fund allows for 100% grants, why wouldn’t every project apply for that fund?**

For projects to be approved under the Tourism Attraction Fund, the applicant must demonstrate that the project will positively promote the state on a national scale and that the project could not qualify for the other funds.

**We are interested in applying for Tourism Attraction Fund, which allows for up to 100% grants. Will our grant request be automatically denied for not having the required 60% match?**

No, IEDA staff and the scoring committee are aware that there may be unique circumstances in which matching funds represent less than 60% of the project for the Tourism Attraction Fund. However, applicants to the Tourism Attraction Fund that fail to demonstrate that the project will positively promote the state on a national scale will be denied.

**Should trail projects apply for the Economically Significant Development fund or the Outdoor Recreation Fund?**

The Economically Significant Development Fund references projects that are primarily vertical infrastructure. The definition for vertical infrastructure is used for other programs within the state and does include the possibility of including trails as an eligible project expense. Under the Destination Iowa Program, we’d recommend that an outdoor project of major trails apply to the Outdoor Recreation Fund. The Economically Significant Fund can be used to consider projects that include multiple components that include trails, but also other components that are not appropriate for the Outdoor Recreation Fund.

**Can ineligible costs such as programming and operational costs be included in the overall project budget--just not requested for reimbursement under this grant?**

No. Ineligible costs should not be included in the application budget. All project costs will be incorporated into the disbursement process.

**Can I schedule a meeting with IEDA staff to discuss the program?**

Due to the volume of inquiries about the program, meetings need focus on specific questions related to individual projects that cannot be answered from the information already available. Prior to requesting a meeting, please thoroughly review all website and application information. You may also want to begin gathering the information necessary to complete the application. In addition to the written materials, a recorded webinar for potential applicants is available at [2022 Destination Iowa Informational Webinar - YouTube](https://youtu.be/lY3ZvNA3yLI). When requesting a meeting, you should provide as much detail as possible about your questions to ensure staff are available and prepared.

**Is this funding available for events?**

No, programming and operational costs are not eligible.

**What is the timeline/turnaround for decisions on applications?**

Due to the uncertainty of the number of applications that will be received, we do not have a set timeline on review and decision notification at this time. Staff will confirm receipt of application, notify you upon confirmation of eligibility and submission to the scoring committee and after final decision has been made. If there are concerns on the application, staff will connect with you to review/revise. Please understand these items will take time to review and additional questions and follow ups will slow this process.