



Corridor

MAY 2022



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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR VISIONARY PEOPLE-ATTRACTION PROJECTS IN IOWA

NORTH IOWA CORRIDOR AND ITS PARTNERS IN VISION NORTH IOWA will be "thinking big" about ways to fit into a new state grant program.

The State of Iowa recently revealed "Destination Iowa" to boost tourism and build local economies. Governor Kim Reynolds announced a \$100 million investment "to bolster the quality of life in Iowa's communities and attract visitors and new residents to the state." This funding is made available through the federal American Rescue Plan Act.

According to the Iowa Economic Development Authority, "Destination Iowa will provide new opportunities to create and invest in attractions that will raise Iowa's profile, welcome out-of-state travelers, and increase visitor spending while accelerating tourism's recovery. It will also spur local economies and contribute to efforts to recruit new members of Iowa's workforce."

Chad Schreck, North Iowa Corridor President and CEO, said, "We've been preaching the need for impact projects to attract and keep people in North Iowa. This program is directing funding towards initiatives like that."

With the shift to more people working remotely and living anywhere, there is increased competition across the country to attract residents, according to Schreck. In addition, the IEDA says the state experienced a large drop in visitor spending and hospitality industry employment over the past two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This grant program is in keeping with our local priorities on workforce and development," he said. "It gives our community an opportunity to really think big and make a difference in how people perceive Iowa. The state is looking for big visionary projects."

It is hoped that Destination Iowa will help create new attractions to entice out-of-state travelers, increase visitor spending, and contribute to recruitment of new residents joining Iowa's workforce. Applicants need to demonstrate the ability to positively project Iowa's image on the national stage.

The grant program is divided into four channels, each with a portion of the total funds to distribute:

- Economic Significant Development (\$30 million)
- Outdoor Recreation (\$40 million)
- Tourism Attraction (\$10 million)
- Creative Placemaking (\$20 million)

Schreck said North Iowa Corridor and its partners in Vision North Iowa are currently discussing how to approach this opportunity and what types of projects best fit Destination Iowa parameters and local needs. "We would love input on what would make a huge difference in our area," he said.

Destination Iowa grants are aimed at cities, counties, and some non-profit organizations. Proposals must include local participation in funding, which can be both public and private dollars. The rolling review of applications will open May 9, and funded projects must be completed by June 30, 2026, but there is no deadline for applications.

CHAD SCHRECK

PRESIDENT & CEO

cschreck@northiowacorridor.com

SHAUN ARNESON

VP, EXISTING BUSINESS & PROJECT
MANAGEMENT

sarneson@northiowacorridor.com

HUNTER CALLANAN

WORKFORCE SPECIALIST

hcallanan@northiowacorridor.com

JOYCE MARTIN

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
COORDINATOR

jmartin@northiowacorridor.com