

Regional Sports Authority District Guidelines

The Regional Sports Authority District (RSAD) program funds districts that actively promote unique and innovative sporting events in Iowa. Applications are available once a year.

Program Description

The Iowa Economic Development Authority will certify RSAD districts each fiscal year on a competitive basis.

Eligibility

Applicants must be an Iowa nonprofit organization **established to promote economic development and tourism** in an area within the state such as a CVB (Convention and Visitors Bureau). Please note, colleges and universities do not meet this definition.

Events that received funding through the Iowa Major Events and Tourism program are ineligible.

Funding

\$1,000,000 in total funding is available.

Application Requirements

Each application must contain the following information:

1. Applicant name, address, email, phone number, contact person, and federal identification number
2. Detailed descriptions of the unique and innovative sporting events.
3. Dates and locations of each event in the application.
4. Written documentation establishing the amount and source of the required 50% cash match
5. The name and contact information for the grant contact and authorized representative.
6. Completed Event Size table
7. Completed Event Economic Impact table

Eligible Expenses

All project expenses (grant request + cash match) must directly relate to the promotion of a unique and innovative physical sporting event(s) to Iowa and be incurred within the fiscal year in which grant funding is being requested (July 1 – June 30).

Examples of eligible expenses include:

- Bid and rights fees
- Sponsorships
- Payments to vendors
- Advertising and marketing
- Venue rental
- Equipment rental
- Promotional materials
- Production costs
- Fees and expenses for officials

Any expense that does not directly relate to the active promotion of a unique and innovative physical sporting event to Iowa is ineligible for funding. This includes the following:

- Staff salaries, wages, and travel costs
- Alcoholic beverages
- Meals and dining on occasions other than the dates of an event described in the application
- Solicitation efforts
- Lobbying fees
- Items purchased for resale
- Prizes given to participants
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Scoring Criteria

RSAD applications receive a score between zero and 100 points. Successful applications must receive at least fifty points.

Economic Impact – 30 Points

Economic impact will be determined by using the following calculation:

Applicants will provide the previous year's or estimate the number of hotel room nights generated by each proposed event and multiply the number of hotel room nights by the average 2025 STR daily room rate for Iowa hotels. The average daily room rate will be provided by the Iowa tourism office based on the data provided by STR, Inc. Intentionally inflated estimates of attendance or a history of providing inaccurate estimates will negatively affect the scoring of an application and may result in noncertification of a district. Other tourism impacts beyond hotel stays may also be considered in scoring.

Leveraged Funds Ratio – 15 Points

Applications with a greater rate of financial participation from entities other than the state will receive a higher score.

Uniqueness and Innovation (Novelty & Quality) – 20 Points

Applications with events that set them apart as new and innovative to Iowa will receive a higher score. Preference will be given to events that are entirely new to Iowa. Events which have not been sponsored by the applicant within the last 3 years or since July 1, 2023, will be scored higher than recurring events with unique and innovative elements.

Event Size & Scope – 10 Points

Applications with large events and a larger total budget will receive more points. Applications that offer a data driven rationale for attendance and hotel projections will score higher.

Need – 15 Points

Events that will not occur without state funds and new events to the RSAD program will receive more points.

Geographic Diversity – 10 Points

The geographic diversity represented by the pool of applicants will be considered.

Required Records

For grant closeout, districts must submit invoices for eligible project expenses and proof of payment that demonstrates full expenditure of awarded state funds along with a 50% match per awarded event. In addition, the awarded RSAD shall submit a comprehensive report in a form determined by the authority detailing:

- Return on Investment of each awarded event
- Number of first-time visitors to the state resulting from the activity/event
- Total number of hotel rooms occupied resulting from the activity/event
- The report shall be submitted on or before July 31 regarding activities that took place between January 1 and June 30 and on or before January 31 for activities that took place between July 1 and December 31 of the previous year.

If a district is unable to provide eligible invoices and proofs of payment for the awarded budget along with meeting all reporting requirements, part of the grant award must be returned to the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

Disbursement of Grant Funds

Awarded districts will receive grant funds in two payments. The first payment of 75% of the award will be made upon the execution of a grant agreement with the Iowa Economic Development Authority. The final payment will be made after completion of the funded events and successful close out of the grant.