

# Major Events and Tourism Program Scoring Rubric

## Event Quality (20 points)

Evaluate the caliber, appeal and execution quality of the event itself, including its prestige, competitive level and ability to deliver a memorable experience that enhances Iowa's reputation.

### 0-5 Points

- Brief event description provided with minimal detail about competitive level of the event, although appeal to the applicant is noted, the appeal to Iowa to host is not compelling
- Limited information about / limited understanding of the target market
- Applicant has met minimum criteria regarding distinctive qualities and may have listed at least one distinct quality compared to other Iowa events
- Event has some regional appeal or recognition, limited national prestige: the applicant may be competing against other Iowa venues or event not in demand by entities outside of Iowa
- Event represents a mid-tier offering in its category

### 5-10 Points

- Clear event description with summary information about competitive appeal to host/applicant, local businesses and public partners, and sound reasons for the State of Iowa to host.
- Target market is clearly identified and includes out-of-state travelers/attendees
- Applicant has listed more than one distinct event quality (first time in Iowa, unique format, expanded scope, etc.)
- Event has recognized regional appeal with some national prestige: demand for the event by entities outside of Iowa is confirmed
- Event is well established but not premiere-tier, strong appeal within a specific demographic

### 10-15 Points

- Detailed event description with clear and detailed competitive excellence that provide justification for hosting the event - for the applicant and the State of Iowa as well as public and private partners and businesses throughout a region/area of Iowa
- Event has broad appeal to a defined, quantifiable national audience
- Applicant has described several significant distinct qualities and the event brings something new to Iowa
- Strong national recognition and reputation of rights holder: national demand for the event is high and competition is documented
- Event has confirmed prestige within its field, attracts high-caliber competitors, performers or attendees.

### 15-20 Points

- Comprehensive event description with exceptional competitive level and cross-demographic appeal that provides justification for hosting the event for the applicant and the State of Iowa, as well as public and private partners and businesses throughout the state
- Event has broad appeal to a defined, quantifiable national and international audience  
Applicant has explained several exceptional distinct qualities that position event as unique opportunity for anyone who hosts (inaugural event, expansion to new market, significant tier)
- Premier national or international reputation (major touring entertainment, championship level event, etc.): National or international demand for the event is well known
- Event has significant prestige, attracts elite competitors/performers and high-profile attendees

# Budget and Alignment with Event Hosting Requirements in RFP (10 points)

This category evaluates whether the budget is realistic and fully detailed, and whether it aligns with actual event hosting requirements and binding obligations. This ensures the event can be successfully executed with the proposed funding.

## 0-3 Points

- Budget is incomplete, inconsistent or doesn't clearly tie to Letter of Intent or RFP/Bid requirements
- Matching funds are unclear, unsupported or below the 50% minimum request
- Limited or no ties to how requested funds are directly tied to bid hosting requirements or includes expenses that are not required by the RFP

## 4-7 Points

- Budget table is mostly complete, consistent and reasonably matches event and RFP requirements
- Matching funds meet 50% threshold, with at least some documentation or clear support, but is not fully confirmed
- Requested funding is tied to hosting requirements, but some items are vaguely defined or lack justification
- There is some additional private investment leveraged and reflected.
- Budget seems feasible, but clarity and documentation of expenses could be stronger

## 8-10 Points

- Budget is complete, detailed and well-organized, clearly matching event RFP and hosting requirements
- Matching funds meet/exceed threshold, funding sources well documented and confirmed
- Funds requested are closely tied to bid/hosting requirements and proportionate to total event budget
- Private investment from local partners is detailed and clear.
- Budget is realistic for event's scale and impact, provides confidence that event is financially viable and can be successfully executed

# Case for Support (10 points)

This category evaluates the clarity and persuasiveness of the applicant's argument for why this event should be funded and why it represents a valuable investment for Iowa's tourism economy and reputation.

## 0-3 Points

- Minimal justification for why Major Events funding is needed and why state support is critical
- Does not connect to the goals of the program (not unique to Iowa, low overnight stays, primarily local event, no long-term tourism benefits)
- Fails to demonstrate what is at risk without funding (cannot secure bid, reduced scale/quality, loss to another destination)

## 4-7 Points

- Explains why funding is important to securing and hosting, with some description of what would change without funding
- Connects to program goals and increases tourism impact and Iowa's visibility, with few specific examples
- Mentions community, regional and statewide benefits, as well as economic impact

## 8-10 Points

- Clearly articulates why this event is a compelling use of Major Events funding and why funds are pivotal to winning/hosting
- Demonstrates clearly how event will generate significant tourism, overnight stays and visibility for Iowa as a destination
- Describes in detail what is at stake without funding and offers details/data to strengthen the case

# Visibility of Iowa (15 points)

This category evaluates how effectively the event will showcase Iowa to visitors and broader audiences, including media exposure, branding opportunities and Iowa's visibility during and after the event.

## 0-5 Points

- Pre-event marketing does not detail opportunities to recognize host city/state or states that the state will be recognized without details
- States that Iowa branding will be included at the event (logo or signage at venue, program mentions, etc.)
- No or minimal plan to provide promotional opportunities and sponsorships opportunities for the State of Iowa and other Iowa venues to showcase Iowa's unique visitor attributes and destination appeal at the event and/or in pre-event marketing/advertising
- No media plan and limited media coverage anticipated or not specified; local news only
- No post-event marketing opportunities are identified to maximizing Iowa's investment through visibility

## 5-10 Points

- Pre-event marketing strategies (website, social media, advertising) are detailed and clearly identify Iowa as the host state in an appealing manner
- A list of strategies for Iowa branding has been developed and provided for the event, including logo+ more on signage, sponsorship visibility, program materials, etc.
- Includes well-defined promotional opportunities and sponsorships opportunities for the State of Iowa and other Iowa venues in the pre-event marketing/advertising and at the event:
  - showcases Iowa's unique visitor attributes
  - maximizes destination appeal
  - encourages longer stays
- Includes specific information about (multi-state) media coverage and publicity to out-of-state audiences with reasoning why the event is likely to appeal to those audiences
- Post-event marketing to attendees and/or other defined audience is well thought-out and opportunities have been identified to maximize Iowa's investment through longer-term visibility

## 10-15 Points

- A full marketing campaign has been developed and provided, demonstrating maximum visibility for the event and detailing how the event will boost Iowa's national brand and attract future tourism interest
- An extensive Iowa Branding Plan is included with multiple touchpoints, such as but not limited to the use of Iowa's brand on tangible event items like signage and program materials; development and or sale of Iowa memorabilia and merchandise; implementation of interactive opportunities such as Iowa hospitality and Iowa celebrity engagement, etc.)
- Exceptional promotional and sponsorships opportunities for the State of Iowa and other Iowa venues in the pre-event marketing/advertising and at the event are detailed:
  - venue and location are strategically located
  - Iowa's unique visitor attributes will be highly visible
  - Iowa's destination appeal will be elevated
  - return visits and longer stays are strategically encouraged to out-of-state travelers
- There is evidence provided that supports high confidence in national and/or international media coverage with Iowa visibility
- Innovative opportunities for engagement/visibility with event attendees during travel through Iowa included.
- Post-event marketing is multi-dimensional and will appeal to multiple travel sectors and out-of-state audiences. High confidence that Iowa's investment will be maximized.

# Economic Impact (30 points)

Evaluate the potential financial benefit to Iowa's tourism economy, including visitor spending, hotel nights and broader economic activity generated by hosting the event.

## 0-10 Points

- Basic past attendance data provided to justify projections but doesn't account for market size, venue, regional capacity, transportation system or other considerations
- No event calculator results are provided
- No economic impact assumptions or study results are provided beyond lodging
- No secondary economic impact information provided
- No quantitative or qualitative third-party information that supports assumptions is provided
  - Minimal hotel night projections (fewer than 200 nights)
- Minimal draw, primarily local attendance (fewer than 25% traveler attendance)
- Unlikely that media, other than local, will report on the event

## 10-15 Points

- Past attendance data provided and includes events in comparable markets (i.e. market size, venue, transportation options, etc.)
- Some information from a credible event calculator has been provided and aligns with *some* of the attendance projections and economic assumptions
- Some economic impact assumptions are provided in addition to lodging
- Some secondary economic impact provided, but not comprehensive
- Assumptions are supported by inclusion of at least one third-party source (i.e. news article, testimonial, research etc.)
- Moderate hotel night projections (200-500 room nights)
- Regional audience draw (26-40% traveler attendance/participation)
- Some media coverage anticipated -event may fill identifiable market gap in calendar, be singular or trending etc.

## 15-20 Points

- Attendance data with documentation provided and includes comparable markets in other states and regions
- Event calculator results are provided and align with other assumptions and projections
- Supporting independent/third-party economic impact confirmation data from *multiple prior host locations* or is a quality event that has never been held before
- Secondary economic impact clearly identified and quantified (dining, retail, transportation, etc.)
- Significant hotel night projections (500-1,000 room nights).
- Strong audience draw (41-59% traveler attendance/participation from 250 miles or further)
- Media coverage anticipated in regional/national outlets.
- Event demonstrates clear tourism economy enhancement.

## 20-25 Points

- Comprehensive attendance data from multiple prior events in comparable markets in other states and regions with strong documentation
- Event has potential for a high quality event that has never been held before anywhere
- Comprehensive event calculator results are provided and align with other assumptions and projections
- Consistent supporting economic impact data or input *from state and national level consultants* or independent/third-parties
- Secondary economic impact identified and quantified and specific estimates of impact by sector are provided (dining, retail, transportation, etc.)
- Substantial hotel night projections (1000-2000 room nights)
  - Very strong audience draw (60-69% traveler attendance/participation from 250 miles or further)
- Significant media coverage anticipated, broadcast to regional/national outlets
- Event clearly enhances Iowa's visibility as a destination for out of state travelers

## 25-30 Points

- Extensive, highly credible attendance documentation with detailed supporting materials, calculations
- Event has potential for a high quality event that has never been held before anywhere
- *Comprehensive* economic impact analysis with significant spending potential across categories has been provided
- Comprehensive event calculator results are provided and align with other assumptions and projections
- Consistent supporting economic impact data or input *from national and international level consultants* or independent/third-parties
- Major hotel night commitment (2000+ room nights), extended stay potential
- Very strong national/international audience draw (70%+ from 250 miles or further)
- Substantial media coverage anticipated, confirmed broadcast to national/beyond outlets.
- Event is a transformational opportunity for Iowa's tourism economy, high potential for future repeat events

# Marketing Plan Quality (15 points)

This category evaluates the effectiveness, comprehensiveness and strategic quality of the marketing plan to attract attendees, with particular focus on reaching target demographics and driving attendance in Iowa.

## 0-5 Points

- Marketing Plan for event is list of tactics and/or is incomplete, brief, generic, or missing details about audience, quantities, partners, tactics and timeline or other key plan components
- Plan relies mainly on passive/organic promotion with no clear strategy to reach visitors beyond 50 miles
- Unlikely that marketing efforts will drive overnight stays or broader tourism activity

## 5-10 Points

- Marketing plan follows best practices and aligns with industry recommendations. It identifies primary audiences and includes a mix of appropriate channels and techniques for the target audiences. It includes digital, social, email and paid media to out of state travelers
- Some strategies are directed at attracting regional, statewide or beyond attendance
  - Local partner coordination and resourcing of the marketing plan is partially clear/included.
- Plan shows reasonable connection between marketing and increased attendance/overnight stays

## 10-15 Points

- Marketing plan is comprehensive, with clearly defined out of state target audiences and specific strategies tailored to each.
- Includes national and/or international marketing and techniques are likely to increase success in out-of-state, national and/or international markets
- Uses robust mix of tactics, partnerships with other entities, and on-site/earned media strategies to extend Iowa's visibility; demonstrates strong marketing capacity.
- Provides clear strategy, including partnerships for driving overnight stays and how success will be measured/evaluated

# Scoring Calculations

Category	Possible Score	Application Score
Event Quality	20	
Budget	10	
Case for Support	10	
Visibility of Iowa	15	
Economic Impact	30	
Marketing Plan	15	

Total Possible Points =100