

## **FY 2022 Board of Directors**

Kris Blocker  
*Boone County CVB*

Anne Drannen  
*Embassy Suites by Hilton*

Laura Elfers  
*Silos & Smokestacks National  
Heritage Area*

Lori Foresman-Kirpes  
*Polk County Conservation*

Staci Scheurenbrand  
*National Balloon Classic*

Travis Stevenson  
*Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad*

Katie Stien  
*Catch Des Moines*

Diana Thies  
*Iowa Falls Chamber/Main Street*

Diane Van Wyngarden  
*Iowa State University*

Amy Zeigler  
*Iowa Tourism Office/IEDA*

### **Region Staff**

Ann Vogelbacher  
*Executive Director*

Kasie Westrum  
*Administrative Assistant*

### **Central Iowa Tourism Region**

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# **Plan of Action FY 2022**

## **Central Iowa Tourism Region**

### **Mission Statement**

To enhance tourism in Central Iowa through information, education, and promotion in cooperation with government and business.

# Executive Summary

The Central Iowa Tourism Region, also known as CITR, is a nonprofit organization that was incorporated in 1987. CITR is one of three tourism regions in the state of Iowa, and the only organization devoted exclusively to enhancing and developing the tourism industry in central Iowa.

The region encompasses a 35 county area between the Minnesota and Missouri borders. Membership in the region is available to the 35 counties and to businesses and organizations within these counties. A multi-property membership is available to businesses with multiple locations in the region. Organizations and businesses located in adjoining counties outside of the region are eligible to join as a neighbor member. Varying benefits are associated with each membership level.

The mission of the Central Iowa Tourism Region is to enhance tourism in Central Iowa through information, education and promotion in cooperation with government and business. The activities to achieve this mission are carried out by the membership of the region through project committees, the board of directors and region staff.

The Action Plan is intended to guide the board of directors, committees, and region staff by providing a blueprint for activities to accomplish the goals of the organization for 2021-2022.

## General Goals

- Increase the number of visitors and dollars spent by visitors in Central Iowa.
- Increase awareness among attractions, events and businesses about the services provided by the region.
- Increase industry participation and membership in CITR.
- Provide outstanding professional development and education opportunities to the membership.
- Maintain a strong and effective organization.
- Utilize public/private partnerships to accomplish region projects.
- Raise the profile of CITR, TFI and overall tourism industry to build support by elected officials.

# Membership

**Goal: Retain current members and continue to recruit new members to the region.**

## **Objectives:**

### **A. Work with the membership committee to continue recruitment and retention program activities.**

#### *Action Steps*

1. Evaluate current membership benefits and explore potential new opportunities.
2. Hold member orientation/refresher sessions at region meetings at key times of the year. These sessions provide current and potential members the opportunity to learn more about region programs and the benefits of membership.
3. Communicate membership benefits and region policies through programs to be determined by the membership committee.
4. Make personal contact with new members including a welcome email or phone call and new member orientation packet. Continue to recognize new members and member prospects attending their first meeting at region meetings.
5. Send orientation materials and make personal contact with new staff members at member organizations when staff changes occur.
6. Solicit leads for potential new members from contact lists available from the Iowa Tourism Office, members and other sources.
7. Encourage members to provide membership information and recruitment packets to potential members in their community or area.
8. Produce membership materials including membership application form, benefits summary and membership orientation materials.
9. Encourage members to become involved with region committees.
10. Work to increase private memberships and retain existing members.

*Responsibility: Region Staff, Membership Committee and Members*

### **B. Work with county representatives and boards of supervisors to maintain involvement of all 35 counties within the region.**

#### *Action Steps*

1. Provide resource information to county appointed representatives so they can communicate the benefits of county participation to their boards of supervisors, along with regular membership communications.
2. Send regular updates to county boards of supervisors including annual report, travel guide, meeting schedule, availability of the Iowa Tourism Grant Program, and county benefits summary sheet.
3. Provide county representatives a copy of the invoice sent to their county auditor each year, along with supporting materials they can share with their board of supervisors.
4. Send annual allocation requests to those counties that require this information in advance for their budgeting process. Make in-person presentations by request.

*Responsibility: Region Staff and County Representatives*

# Education

**Goal: Provide quality educational opportunities for CITR members.**

## Objectives:

### **A. Determine educational needs of members.**

#### *Action Steps*

1. Work with education committee to select topics and speakers for seminars held in conjunction with region meetings.
2. Continue to solicit input from members at region meetings for potential topics and speakers.
3. Deliver/enhance educational opportunities including at least one webinar, plus regularly scheduled in-person seminars at region meetings.
4. Communicate with the other regions, state staff and other resource providers to share speaker ideas and partner where appropriate.

### **B. Provide quality educational seminars at CITR meetings.**

#### *Action Steps*

1. Continue to offer two-part sessions, when possible to maximize the level of training offered at region meetings, budget and travel by members.
2. Encourage members to take what they learn at region meetings to the next level. Create opportunities for members to share how they are utilizing or implementing strategies from region meetings.
3. Host a Tourism Town Meeting with the Iowa Tourism Office.
4. Hold Annual Meeting to conduct election of board members, recognition of region volunteers and launch programs for the coming year.
5. Investigate additional partnerships to supplement resources for training opportunities.

*Budget: \$10,000*

*Responsibility - Region Staff, CITR Education & Annual Meeting Committees, Attendees and Members*

# Grant Programs

**Goal: Organizations and businesses are aware of opportunities to apply for funding through the Iowa Tourism Grant Program and Iowa Tourism Conference Scholarships.**

## Objectives:

### **A. Iowa Tourism Office Grant Program.**

#### *Action Steps*

1. Promote availability of the grant program to region members and county representatives.
2. Provide reviewers for the Iowa Tourism Grant program and to provide assistance as needed/requested by the Iowa Economic Development Authority/Tourism.
3. Administration of grants awarded to applicants in the Central Region including contract preparation, project monitoring and reimbursement. Provide final report to the state office.

*Responsibility: Grant Committee Members, Region Staff and Applicants*

## **B. Iowa Tourism Conference Scholarship Program.**

### *Action Steps*

1. Develop timeframe, revise application and distribute application materials.
2. Promote availability of scholarships to industry members.
3. Recruit review committee members and facilitate review process and selection of applicants.
4. Administer the scholarship program including funding notifications, preparation of project agreements, and monitoring.

*Responsibility: Grant Committee Members, Region Staff and Applicants*

*Budget: \$0 – names of the 10 applicants selected will be provided to Iowa Tourism Office*

# **Legislative**

**Goal: Elected officials will support tourism programs in Iowa and the central region.**

## **Objectives:**

### **A. Support the legislative goals of the Travel Federation of Iowa.**

#### *Action Steps*

1. Appoint four representatives from the region and the CTR Executive Director to serve on the TFI Board of Directors.
2. Provide financial support to TFI.
3. Secure District Leaders from the region.
4. Work with the TFI lobbyists to schedule advocacy training for District Leaders and others from the region.
5. Serve on TFI related committees and serve as an advocate for TFI's programs and goals.
6. Inform region members about legislative issues.
7. Provide additional appointments to state boards and committees as requested or as opportunities arise.

*Budget: \$5,000*

*Responsibility: Region Staff, CTR Board, TFI Board, District Leaders and Region Members*

### **B. Provide assistance on local governmental issues as requested.**

#### *Action Steps*

1. Provide resource materials and statistical information to local organizations, communities and areas.
2. Assist local tourism groups on an as-needed basis to develop funding streams for tourism and plans for tourism.

*Responsibility: Region Staff and Members*

# Marketing

**Goal: Increase visitation to Central Iowa and increase awareness by potential visitors.**

## **Objectives:**

### **A. Produce and distribute the annual CITR travel guide.**

#### *Action Steps:*

1. Secure advertisers to help support production of the 2022 guide.
2. Request updates for the travel guide from members and county representatives. Utilize information provided to prepare updates to the content of the guide so the publication is as up-to-date and accurate as possible for travelers.
3. Work with the brochure committee on the design of the guide, quantities to be printed, potential changes or improvements to the guide, etc.
4. Offer advertisers in the guide a reader response listing and forward leads when received.
5. Continued distribution of the travel guide. Distribution includes the Iowa Welcome Centers, inquiries from the web site, in-office requests by telephone and mail, fulfillment, Iowa State Fair, tradeshow, and other special requests including quantities for meetings & conventions, new residents and employees, and other distribution points.

*Budget: Project is partially funded through ad sales*

*Responsibility: Region Staff, Brochure Committee & Advertisers*

### **B. Provide an opportunity for region members to meet one-on-one with tour planners at the Travel Iowa Marketplace.**

#### *Action Steps*

1. Survey planners regarding timing for next marketplace.
2. Secure event space for the marketplace.
3. Work with planning committee to determine budget, theme, schedule and policies for the marketplace.
4. Coordinate all planning and implementation of the show including exhibitor registration, tour planner registration, sponsorships, etc.

*Budget: to be determined*

*Responsibility: Region Staff, CITR Planning Committee and Exhibitors*

### **C. Provide opportunities for member promotion through development of a pilot program with a blogger and/or micro-influencers.**

#### *Action Steps*

1. Develop potential themes and form committee to review potential partners to work with including the Iowa Gallivant and/or Des Moines Hummingbirds.
2. Establish guidelines and local match requirements for member partners and develop application for participation.
3. Implement and evaluate the pilot program.

*Budget: to be determined – approximately \$5,000*

*Responsibility: Region Staff, CITR Planning Committee and Exhibitors*

### **D. Serve as a referral source for planners seeking meeting space in Central Iowa.**

#### *Action Steps*

1. Forward leads and inquiries to region members from those planning meetings, conventions, reunions, etc.

*Responsibility: Region Staff and Members*

# Power of Travel Day

**Goal: Work in partnership with the other regions to provide a statewide educational event in the fall that compliments the annual tourism conference held in the spring.**

## Objectives:

### **A. Host event in partnership with all three tourism regions.**

*Action Steps:*

1. Secure industry member from central region to serve on planning committee.
2. Work with committee members to select topics and speakers and other enhancements to this statewide training opportunity.
3. Assist with registration, promotion and implementation of the event.
4. Post-event analysis.

*Budget: \$7,500 per region for total of \$22,500*

*Responsibility: Region Staff and Committee Members*

# Special Projects

**Goal: Identify and undertake special projects on behalf of CTR that further the goals of the Iowa Tourism Office and benefit the tourism industry.**

## Objectives:

### **A. Identify potential special projects and prioritize these**

*Action Steps:*

1. Identify potential ideas for special projects.
2. Develop recommendations and select priority projects for funding.

### **B. Implementation of special projects approved by the CTR board**

*Action Steps:*

1. Research potential costs for special projects and develop a budget for each project.
2. Research potential cooperative projects with the other tourism regions where appropriate.
3. Committee members for special projects will be recruited to provide feedback and guidance as needed.
4. Top votes for FY 22 special project funding:
  - a. Iowa State Fair Booth
  - b. Iowa Tourism Leadership Institute
  - c. Career Development
  - d. Continue Guide Training Program
  - e. Refreshed Travel Iowa Marketplace - possible addition of meeting planners in addition to group tour planners

*Budget: \$15,000*

*Responsibility: Region Staff, Committee Members and Project Partners*

# Operations - CITR Board of Directors

**Goal: Lead a strong organization that represents the interests of the members of the region.**

*Action Steps:*

1. Board members will serve as leaders and advocates for the region.
2. The board of directors establishes region programs, sets policy, approves the annual budget & action plan and monthly financial statements.
3. Officers of the region serve as the finance/executive and nominating committees.
4. Assist with identifying and developing leaders within the organization.
5. Meet with staff at the Iowa Tourism Office, IEDA as needed.
6. Conduct the annual performance review of the executive director.

*Responsibility: Board of Directors*

# Operations - Region Staff

**Goal: Facilitate a strong and effective organization that assists region members, improves the tourism industry in the region and promotes visiting Central Iowa.**

*Action Steps:*

1. Support region committees and assist all committees with achieving their missions.
2. Oversee all day-to-day operations of the region including lead fulfillment, membership & other communications, finances of the region, report preparation and maintain the records of the organization.
3. Represent the region at tradeshow and marketplaces as budget allows.
4. Represent the region to other state and regional associations and organizations.
5. Assist organizations with tourism planning and technical assistance.
6. Develop annual budget with monthly projections of income and expenses, preparation of monthly financial reports, quarterly and annual reports and all other financial reporting.
7. Ensure compliance with contracts for funding the region.
8. Support programs of the Iowa Tourism Office/IEDA.
9. Participate in weekly conference calls as scheduled by the Iowa Tourism Office/IEDA.
10. Assist the Iowa Tourism Office/IEDA by referring industry members to the traveliowa.com database, and conveying the importance of keeping their event and attraction up-to-date on the Iowa Tourism Office/IEDA website.
11. Prepare and submit monthly reports to the Iowa Tourism Office/IEDA.
12. Prepare and submit annual report as required by the FY 2022 contract.
13. Arrange for an independent annual review of the region's finances.

*Budget: Operations*

*Responsibility: Region Staff*



# **CITR Committee Mission Statements**

**FY 2022 • July 2021 - June 2022**

## **Annual Meeting Committee**

This committee selects the site, theme and assists with the region's annual meeting.

## **Brochure Committee**

This committee makes recommendations for production of the CITR Travel Guide.

## **Education Committee**

This committee determines topics and speakers for the seminars held in conjunction with region meetings.

## **CITR Scholarship Review Committee**

This committee reviews applications and awards scholarships to attend the Iowa Tourism Conference.

## **Travel Iowa Marketplace Committee**

This committee works to plan and implement the Travel Iowa Marketplace tradeshow.

## **Power of Travel Day Committee**

This committee works in partnership with all three tourism regions to assist in planning and implementation of this one-day educational event held in the Fall.

## **Member Promotion Committee**

This committee will develop a pilot program to promote region members through working with a blogger and/or micro-influencers.

## **Special Projects Committees**

These committees will coordinate efforts undertaken through the special projects approved by the CITR board of directors.

## **Iowa Tourism Grant Program**

CITR will provide reviewers for the Iowa Tourism Office grants committee as requested by IEDA/Tourism.

## **Iowa Department of Transportation – Tourism Signage Committee**

CITR will appoint one representative to the committee that reviews applications for tourism related signage programs coordinated by the Iowa Department of Transportation.

***CITR bylaws require that you be a county appointed representative or private member to serve on region committees.***