

The Designee Handbook provides an overview of program requirements related to your Iowa Great Places designation. Find information on acknowledgement, reporting requirements, legislative correspondence, sample press releases and how to keep in touch with the program. The Iowa Great Places Program is administered by the Iowa Arts Council, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs.

Acknowledgement

Acknowledging the Iowa Great Places Program or the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs' support in materials and announcements, audio and visual is at your discretion. If you have specific questions about publicizing your activity, please [contact us](#).

Designation Expectations

Following designation, communities are expected to be active members in the Iowa Great Places network. In order to demonstrate active participation and continued commitment through the re-designation application process, communities must have participated in more than two qualifying Great Places meetings, events or professional development opportunities as determined by Iowa Great Places staff within the five-year designation period. Such opportunities may include an annual meeting, regional networking opportunities, webinars, or sponsored state conferences hosted by partner state agencies. Additionally, all designated Iowa Great Places must be willing to be active participants in the Iowa Great Places mentoring program for potential or newly designated communities as needed. Designated mentors and mentees will be matched by Iowa Great Places staff based on community similarities or geographic proximity. The mentorship structure will be flexible based on the needs of the mentee and can include but is not limited to application advice, visioning best practices, in-person visits, or conference calls.

Reporting

Reporting for Iowa Great Places Designation and/or Funding

Completion of a report at the end of each annual year is a requirement of the MOU agreement. Reports are due January 1. Designees who submit a late annual report will be put on a funding moratorium of no less than one year. Grantees with an outstanding report are not eligible for any Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs grant programs until the report is completed and submitted.

Annual Report Forms

Annual reports must be submitted [online](#). Annual Reports will not be accepted in any other format.

Legislative Correspondence

You can help communicate the value of the Iowa Great Places Program and tell the story of its impact in Iowa. Your elected officials are responsible for state appropriations to the Iowa Great Places Program and it's important they hear from Iowans like you who are working in and passionate about their community. Learn how to contact your elected officials and communicate the value and impact of the funding you have received using the resources below.

- Find your [State Senators and Representatives](#)
- Find your Federal [Senators](#) and [Representatives](#)

Sample Letter to Your Legislators

(Letterhead)

(Date)

(Organization Name)

(Organization Address)

(Organization City, State ZIP)

The Honorable (Name of your State Senator or Representative)

(Iowa House of Representatives OR Iowa Senate)

(Home Address of State Senator or Representative)

(City, State Zip)

Dear (Senator _____ or Representative _____),

I am pleased to inform you that (Name of Organization) has been designated an Iowa Great Place by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. As a 2017 designee recipient, we wish to thank you for your support of the Iowa Great Places Program through annual appropriation from the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure and State General Funds.

This Iowa Great Places designation will support (Brief summary of Vision). (Describe the positive impact on the quality of life or cultural vitality of Iowa, public value and number of people who will be served by your project. Describe the value of public funding to your project and community.)

On behalf of (Name of Organization), I would like to invite you to experience (Name of Iowa Great Places Designee). For more information, please contact (Organization Contact Name) at (Phone, Fax, Email Address, and/or Website).

Sincerely,

(Signature)

(Typed Name)

(Title within Organization)

Sample Press Releases

The Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs sends out press releases to announce new Iowa Great Places designees. You can do your part to bring awareness to your designation by sending press releases to the media. You may use the following sample press releases for guidance in publicizing the designation and any related activity.

Sample Press Release to Publicize Designation

(Letterhead)

(Organization Name)

(Organization Contact Address)

(Organization City, State Zip)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Date)

Contact: (Contact Name, Phone, Fax, and E-mail Address)

(Press Release Headline)

(CITY NAME) - The (Name of Organization) is pleased to announce that it has been designated an Iowa Great Place by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs and Iowa Great Places Citizens Advisory Board. The designation recognizes (Name of Organization) for (vision).

The Iowa Great Places Program seeks to recognize places that take action to enhance their local assets while staying true to the qualities that makes them unique. This designation enables (Name of Organization) to become eligible for Iowa Great Places funding opportunities, additional resources and technical assistance from the Department of Cultural Affairs and program staff. (Describe the positive impact on the quality of life or cultural vitality of Iowa, public value and number of people who will be served by your project. Describe the value of public funding to your project and community.)

(Quote from project or organization leader, board member or legislator to express thanks for the designation, value of public recognition, encourage people to participate, or elaborate on the significance of efforts, etc.)

The Iowa Great Places Program was established in (YEAR) and to date has recognized # Iowa Great Places. More information on the Iowa Great Places Program is available by visiting iowaculture.gov.

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(Insert your organization's boilerplate information. See example below.)

The Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs and its three divisions – the Iowa Arts Council, Produce Iowa-State Office of Media Production and the State Historical Society of Iowa – empower Iowa to build and sustain culturally vibrant communities by connecting Iowans to the people, places and points of pride that define our state. The department's work enables Iowa to be recognized as a state that fosters creativity and serves as a catalyst for innovation where the stories of Iowa are preserved and communicated to connect past, present and future generations. iowaculture.gov.

Keep In Touch

Designee Promotional Information

Let us know when Iowa Great Places activity is happening by [sending us updates, images and event details](#). The Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs is dedicated to communicating the impact and value of designee activity through department platforms and networks. To have your event or activity considered for inclusion on department social media platforms, send the following and we will highlight activity in our event [calendar](#), [blog](#), newsletter and social media.

- Title
- Description (150 words or less)
- Date or Deadline of Activity
- Link to more information
- Image (400 pixels W x240 pixels H)

Newsletter

[Sign up](#) for Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs newsletters.

Social Media

Use the hashtag **#iowagreatplace** and **#iowaculture** to promote your funded activity.

- **Facebook** Like the Iowa Arts Council on Facebook at facebook.com/IowaCulture.
- **Twitter** Follow the Iowa Arts Council on Twitter at [@iowaculture](https://twitter.com/iowaculture).
- **Instagram** Follow the Iowa Arts Council on Instagram at [@iowaculture](https://www.instagram.com/iowaculture)

Project Visits

Invite department staff, board members, and legislators to your Iowa Great Places activities. You can find your legislators' contact information on the [Find Your Legislator](#) webpage.